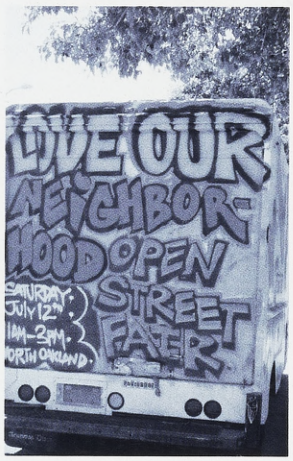
A RENOVATOR'S HISTORY

Seth Melchert





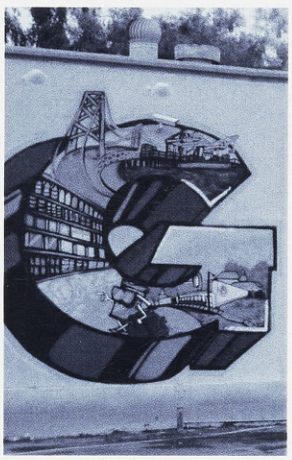








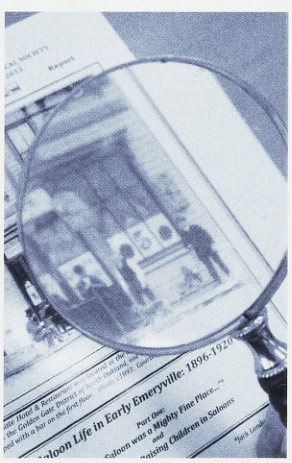




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PHOTO KEY (IMAGES LEFT TO RIGHT)

FARMERS' MARKET Susan Park, food business incubator manager at Phat Beets Food Justice Market & CSA 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma	**NEIGHBORHOOD CELEBRATION** Promotion for 'Love Our Neighborhood Day,' a one-day event closing part of San Pablo Avenue 2014	**LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR** Laura Ingram, activist & founder of SPAGGIA neighborhood group, at 'Love Our Neighborhood Day' celebration 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma	**GARDEN** Native planting by neighbors along Stanford Avenue's median 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma	**NEIGHBORHOOD HOME** Victorian-style house circa 1880, possibly built by Klinkner 2014 Photo by Gene Anderson
HISTORIC SITE Oakland Public Library's Golden Gate Branch Library, a Carnegie endowed building constructed in 1918 2015 Photo by Lorah Gross	**NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVIST** Black Panther Member Melvin Dickson leading a tour for the North Oakland Restorative Justice Council 2014	**HISTORIC SITE** Mural painted in 2011 by Luke McCabe on the neighborhood market, 59th Street & San Pablo Avenue 2016	Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE COMMONS ARCHIVE Commons Archive Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE	**NEIGHBORHOOD CELEBRATION** Golden Gate Branch Library's block party to launch Commons Archive 2017 Photo by Amber Hoy
LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR Josephine Lee, founder & director of the Golden Gate Branch Library's Summer Jazz Concerts 2015 Photo by Matt Dibble	**HISTORY RESOURCE** Emeryville Historical Society Journal, a quarterly about the area in publication since 1988	**HISTORIC SITE** The Fratellanza Club, still active neighborhood Italian social club founded in 1932 at 1140 66th Street 2014		**NEIGHBORHOOD HOMES** Engraving of Charles Klinkner, Golden Gate real estate developer 1883 Courtesy Oakland Public Library's Oakland History Room

Photos by marksearch unless noted

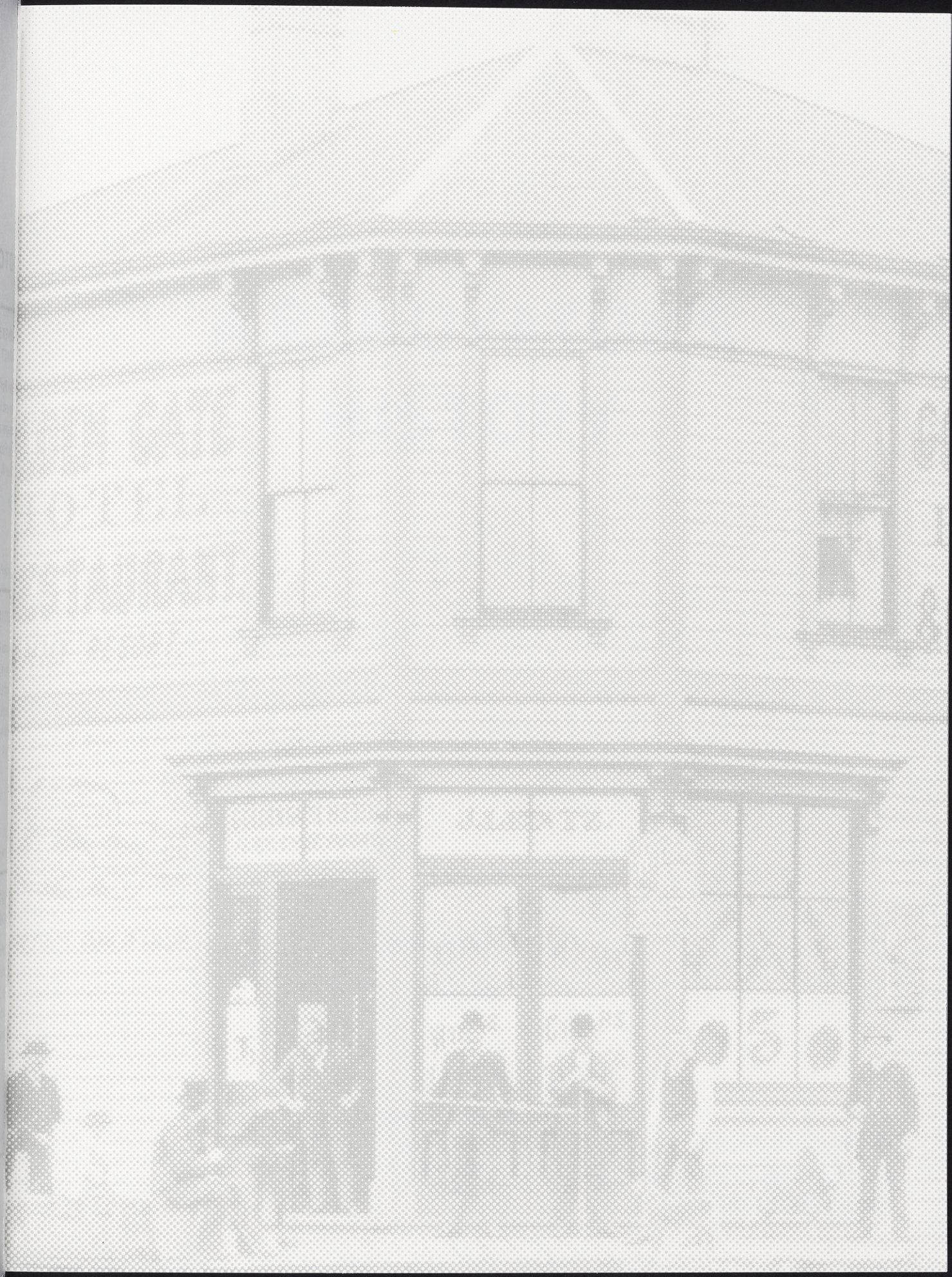


PHOTO PREVIOUS PAGE

Golden Gate Hotel, at Marshall Street & Stanford Avenue, 1886

Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society

A RENOVATOR'S HISTORY

Seth Melchert

1988

Oakland Public Library
Golden Gate Branch
5606 San Pablo Avenue
Oakland, CA

COMMONS ARCHIVE

Collaborators

marksearch

Golden Gate Branch Library

Oakland Public Library

Oakland Public Library's Oakland History Room

African American Museum & Library at Oakland

Friends of the Golden Gate Library

Golden Gate Community Association

PLACE for Sustainable Living

Golden Gate Recreation Center

Emeryville Center of Community Life

Emeryville Historical Society

Emeryville Senior Center

North Oakland Senior Center

Kala Art Institute

Commons Archive

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Sue Mark gratefully acknowledges permission from Seth Melchert to reprint his journal and from the City of Oakland Planning Department to reprint selections from *Rehab Right*.

Commons Archive is a project initiated by cultural researcher Sue Mark in collaboration with stakeholders in the Golden Gate Branch Library service area (North Oakland, South Berkeley, Emeryville). The views expressed by individuals or in materials developed as part of Commons Archive are representative of the project's collective conception and production and are not necessarily the views of the Oakland Public Library or any other individual involved.

INTRODUCTION

"Who are we? What is this place? Who does it belong to?"

"Sharing local history brings us closer together as things change."

–Golden Gate neighbors

Whose stories are preserved and whose are lost? This large question is at the heart of Commons Archive, a neighborhood memory bank organized by cultural researcher Sue Mark at North Oakland's Golden Gate Branch Library. Initiated in 2016 in response to profound demographic shifts impacting this community, Commons Archive includes materials, special programs and installations throughout the library. The archive's unconventional format highlights recollections that, if undocumented, will disappear.

Commons Archive honors neighbors' multiple roles as participants, narrators and creators of the many histories of this dynamically changing area. This neighborhood's lifecycle has moved at varying rates: over the past five years, this wedge of North Oakland, South Berkeley and Emeryville has experienced profound shifts, sparking debates among residents about local identity.

As a longstanding community anchor, the Golden Gate Branch Library bears witness to the neighborhood's changes. This branch has served hundreds of thousands of neighbors since opening its doors on December 15, 1918. From youth clubs to Diwali festivals, garden shows to film screenings, the library strives to reflect the diversity of the neighborhood.

Commons Archive enriches this goal by holding in place the stories of those who have lived here and providing access to these stories for years to come. As neighbors continue to flow through the community, the archive will stand to preserve these memories.

The Golden Gate Library Local Collection presents some materials that were, up until now, stored in basements, locked file cabinets and forgotten boxes. These newsletters, journals, unpublished papers, articles, scrapbooks and reports describe a neighborhood that has been and will continue to be supported by a vital network of local organizations. The Local

Collection brings together narratives of the dedicated efforts of neighbors and community-based organizations.

Commons Archive not only peels back the neighborhood's layers but also stretches towards the future. We hope that these materials will become an invaluable resource for neighbors and researchers. We invite you to add to this growing pool of information by commenting on these materials, sharing your experiences in the community and inviting your neighbor to join the process.

Sue Mark
Cultural Researcher
marksearch

Erin Sanders
Manager
Golden Gate Branch Library

2019

PREFACE
A RENOVATOR'S HISTORY

When Seth Melchert first laid eyes on the Victorian that has been his Golden Gate home for nearly three decades, he knew he was there for the long haul. Raised in Berkeley, Melchert was drawn to this neighborhood in the late 1970s by the magnetic force of the Siddha Yoga Ashram Center. "There was an ineffable potency," he recalled. "The atmosphere was so sacred, so thick with meditation. It was almost like you could spoon it out...people who know nothing about mysticism, about spirituality, about meditation, they would walk in and maybe they'd start to cry."

The Ashram opened its doors in 1975 in the old Stanford Hotel, a historic building in a rough industrial area near the Emeryville border that had seen better days. According to Melchert, that was the point--to foster an accessible meditation community in the center of urban grit. Initially, many Ashram members lived in the hotel's maze of small rooms. The Ashram served this nascent community through meditation courses, yoga classes, presentations and a vegetarian café.

By 1988, there were more than two hundred households connected to the Ashram in about a half mile radius of the Siddha Center. These mainly young white folks, some single, others with young families, constituted a major wave of change in a predominantly working-class African American neighborhood. Melchert felt that while the Ashram fostered a new white community, it coexisted rather than connected with the long-time black community, one that had defied post-World War II redlines: the racially discriminatory practice of denying home mortgage credit to African Americans.

As a young carpenter, Melchert readily found work within the Ashram community, renovating newly purchased homes that had fallen into disrepair. At first, he delved into renovating his own home, a careful process of resuscitating "its lost soul." After entering the building trade by necessity, Melchert's practice has evolved into a modest green construction and rebuilding company that embodies his personal philosophy of sincere listening and clear communication. For Melchert, a home is a vibrant and living skin that connects not only to the private self but also to the complex matrix of the neighborhood.

Melchert generously lent his home restoration narrative to the Golden Gate Library Local Collection. He describes the piece-by-piece reconstitution of his home's Victorian features and how he built a sense of community on his street. Soon after moving in, Melchert and

his wife sought the stories of those who had been in the neighborhood for generations. An impassioned letter to the community, posted in 2015 on Nextdoor, the online neighborhood network, is included with his journal. After so many years, he is now a long-time resident who expresses a sense of responsibility to the neighborhood: "So change happens, and we adapt. Part of adapting is recognizing the impact, which is what I am doing right now. Also, within those changes are stories of people who lived, thrived, struggled, served, cared, aspired. Another part of adapting is to speak about those lives, those communities; knowing the history helps us become rooted here ourselves."

Following Melchert's personal reflections are selections from *Rehab Right*, a detailed how-to guide that made a mark in his profession. Produced by the City of Oakland in 1978 through the support of several local, state and federal grants, this pioneering guide, intended "to tune-up architectural awareness," was distributed to local homeowners for free. The handbook emerged in the era of do-it-yourself home improvement and triggered similar publications across the country. The Oakland Planning Department has granted permission to reprint part of the book.

For those who would like to delve deeper, the entire publication is available online: http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/agenda/oak039424.pdf



5521 Marshall Street

A RENOVATOR'S HISTORY
8 January, 1988

I am presently in the third month of a major renovation of our new house. We bought it in October, 1987, and we expect to move in sometime in February of this year. We have undertaken some major repairs, improvements, and additions to the house and in the course of the work I have learned (or can speculate) much about the history of the house, and I have removed a lot of evidence which future renovators might have used to speculate for themselves. Therefore I am undertaking this brief history for the benefit of the record.

ORIGINAL HOUSE

When the house was built it was a 1000-square foot, single story, 2 bedroom house with a basement and attic. The basement might have had a small section in the rear with a concrete floor and at least one door to the outside, perhaps two. The entry way was spacious with a curved ceiling and doors leading to the front bedroom, the dining room, and the living room. The front door probably had stained glass, and I wouldn't doubt that the central window in the living room bay did too. The door window was plexiglass when we bought the house. A pair of sliding doors could be pulled out of the wall in between the dining and living rooms to separate the two, and the metal track was still partly in place when we opened up the walls. The dining room had a fireplace and hearth. Although the heath had since been removed, the floor joists below were framed to carry a masonry load there. To the left of the fireplace stood a pass-through cabinet to the kitchen, perhaps with a glass-door cupboard above it. Although this cabinet is long gone, the kitchen and dining room walls there were framed with headers at 6'-7" to accommodate the cabinet. To the right of the fireplace was the entry to the kitchen. The kitchen had a stove on the wall with the chimney, but probably was meant to have no other kitchen appliances. The cabinets and whatever sink that might have existed were probably placed in a small pantry behind the kitchen, with a small window overlooking the back yard. This was a design which I suspect came from a maid and butler mentality, keeping the clean up out of sight. Next to the pantry was another small room which also opened on

to the kitchen, the back porch. Unlike the triple-vee-groove wainscotting in the kitchen, it was covered to the ceiling with single-beaded 1x4 paneling. The porch had a back door opening to a single flight of stairs descending along the side of the building into the yard.

The front bedroom was entered from the dining room, and the back bedroom was entered through the kitchen. The two were connected by a short hallway 6 feet long by 8 feet wide. Perhaps this hallway was used for either dressing, washing, or it was some sort of a closet. The walls were paneled with the same beaded board that the back porch had, but I do not know if this was original or added on at a later date, when it became a real bathroom. A second, smaller room opened off of this hallway, bordered by the two bedrooms and the kitchen. It was in this room that the attic hatch was located. This small room would have certainly been a closet.

The attic was paneled with both central vee-groove paneling and beaded paneling, and floored with 1x4 t&g.

I do not know the extent of plumbing in the original house, and there may well have been none. There was no electricity, as the house was lit by gas.

The roof was shingled with cedar shingles.

1987 HOUSE
We bought the house from Rosey Hines, a middle-aged black lady who had some sort of work at a hospital, plus seemed to have a sewing business in her home. She had a son living at home, Robert, who goes to Diablo Valley College, and from the large amount of mail that comes for other people too, more children either lived there or were close by.

She kept a the house clean and feeling hospitable, although much of its decor was unfortunate. The ceilings in the entry, living room and dining room had a cottage cheese texture with glitter thrown onto it, with fake wood paneling and cheap wood molding. The carpet was nice, but she kept it covered with heavy plastic. The pocket doors separating the dining and living rooms had been removed, and the pocket walls cut open and replaced with open shelves. She had added a second kitchen in the dining room "for the children", with black and white linoleum tiles on the floor and black and white ceramic tiles on the walls. The fireplace had been bricked in long before, and the pass-through cabinet had been removed and walled in.

The main kitchen was decent but somewhat sparse, with cabinets painted dark blue, fake brick masonite on one wall, and mosaic tiles on the floor laid somewhat haphazardly. The bathroom was bright green, with a low soffit over the shower and fake quarry tile vinyl flooring. The room in back of the kitchen was at one time a laundry room/back porch. It had the only heater in the house, a top-vented wall gas furnace. A new back porch had been added on, made of cheap or salvaged materials and not very securely structured. The fiberglass roofing leaked, the room shook on its unbraced 4x4 posts, the sheetrock sagged, and not much worked in terms of locks and windows. The windows on the south, west and some on the east face of the house had been replaced with single-hung aluminum sash, and the remaining wood sash were minimally operable. There were three leaky skylights in the attic with a strange hood/vent attachment.

The wood rain gutters looked as if they had never been cleaned, with mounds of moss growing up over the top. No wonder every rain brought rivulets down the inside of the dining room wall where the alcove juts out into the soffit area. The redwood siding on the west and south walls were covered with a very crummy stucco job and painted "cactus", better known as an institutional green. The gable wall facing the street was covered with asphalt/asbestos shingles, over a layer of plywood. I haven't dug down to see what, if anything, remains of the original wall siding. Part of the front of the basement wall had been covered with a brick veneer wall painted red and white. Much of the exterior trim had been removed, although judging by the simple trim on the sister house across and up the street, it probably wasn't very fancy. The south half of the basement floor was concrete, poured at two separate times. Willie Jones, who has lived next door since the early 1960's, said the front two-thirds of the slab was poured just recently, within the last year or so. The other half of the basement had a dirt floor, was dank and filled with miscellaneous junk and boxes. Rosey had the walls all sheetrocked, although it was severely under-nailed and only some of it was taped. Most of the windows around the basement perimeter were filled in with odd sash or were broken and inoperable.

STYLE & AGE

Shortly after we bought the house we hired Jane Spangler to inspect the house and tells us about it. While I was primarily interested in the history of the house, she is a wealth of knowledge in structure, renovation techniques, hazardous materials, and so

forth. (In fact, I was concerned that the white powder crusted over the floor joists, which I was working beneath as the foundation repair proceeded, was something toxic. She assured us that it was simply whitewash, although chlordane is not at all uncommon to find there, and asbestos was not out of the question either.)

First off she told us that the house is a Queen Anne raised-basement cottage, dating from about 1890, possibly as early as 1888. This is quite possible, since the deed states that the lot was surveyed and recorded in August, 1887. The three-lap siding looked like it was from a slightly later date to her, although she did not say what made her think that. The two wood columns on the front porch are not original either, she said, although they are nothing to get rid of because of their elegance. However, the front door is "right out of 1895". She said that the doors inside had been added later because the originals would have been at least 6'-8" if not 7'-0". The present doors are all 5-panel, 6'-6", some with oval cover plates that were about 1925 vintage. However, once I had the plaster off many of the walls, the old headers were set for 6'-6" doors. She also said that the coved ceilings in the dining, living, and entry rooms were not original, since their style didn't come until later either. However I never found any evidence that suggested there was any other plaster configuration at the top of the walls. It is clear that there was a major remodel of the house at some early date, probably in the twenties. A patch of concrete outside of the back basement door has 1924 etched in it. However, I am not clear about what work was done then and what work was original. I personally doubt that the three-lap siding or the coved ceilings were added later: with plumbing and electricity certainly added on at some point, some other concurrent work is not unlikely, but to re-side the place after only 35 years or to re-plaster three rooms? It seems more plausible to us that some different siding might have been available at the earlier date. Well, we could be wrong and I can't say for sure.

She said that the attic might have been finished during the war because of a housing crunch at that time. However, I'm not sure that the present third-floor stairs were added in the front entry at this time because of the plywood on their underside.

She observed that the concrete sidewalk and entry path were original because of the designs scored in them. At

the corners of the low step in the path a couple of feet in from the sidewalk there is recent concrete, as if an iron gate or fence had once been anchored in it but was busted out and the step patched. The tall palm tree in front of the house is what Jane said was a "Wedding Palm". The tradition, she said, was to plant a pair of these in front of a new house where a newlywed couple was moving. The spouse of this palm was probably over the property boundary, symmetrical with the front porch, where the small factory stands next door.

STRUCTURE

The first order of business for our renovation was to replace the brick foundation. Some one had already capped the foundation wall along the driveway. Their work had included anchoring the wall with anchor bolts, which indicated some degree of structural integrity, so we opted not to replace that section of foundation. The foundation under the front porch had also been replaced previously, with a true concrete perimeter footing. We didn't change that one either. But along the north wall, the footing was failing badly, due to the inoperable rain gutters and a leaky sewer. The bricks just didn't have the strength to hold together as a unit in the saturated soil. The new foundation, under the west, north and east perimeter walls is 2 feet deep, 18 inches wide, has plenty of steel reinforcing, and lots of anchor bolts. The house was sagging badly, dropping over 2 inches from the front door to under the bathroom, and barely sloping back up 3/4 of an inch to the back wall. I might have tried harder to level the floor, but I was pretty jittery about holding up all that weight on the temporary support walls without adding the additional stresses of lifting more weight.

The post and girder system down the central axis of the building was a poor design, with small loose-brick piers and the posts not anchored to them in any way. However, because the existing slab surrounded many of these piers, I installed a continuous concrete footing at only one end of the wall.I then tied the whole post and girder wall system together by in-filling studs between the posts, and nailing 3/8" plywood over one face.

For earthquake safety, I coupled 6' long threaded rods onto anchor bolts around the whole foundation and bolted the top plate of the basement wall to the rod, thus solidly connecting the whole wall to the foundation. I then used heavy-duty hold-downs to tie this 4x4 top plate to the first floor joists. I used 7 hold-downs, spread around the perimeter and central

girder, and tied down the joists between with pairs of hurricane ties. In addition to the median girder wall, I plywood-ed several other walls in the basement for shear strength.

The joists are full-dimension 2x8 and run the entire width of the house. At the dining room alcove these joists run over 26 feet long. They were blocked at the ends and bridged at mid span, but strangely enough there was no blocking over the central girder. Because of several bathroom configurations over the years, two joists had been cut off for the toilet drain, and were never headed off, nor were the adjoining joists doubled. The joists under the old back porch had been well-cut-up for various drain pipes, and were also somewhat decayed from water leaks over the years. And around the chimney and old hearth, no joists were doubled to carry the adjoining load. Needless to say, we sistered on new 2x8's wherever prudent.

The subflooring was all 1x4 t&g fir, generally in poor condition by the time we got the house and uncovered it. I was hoping that it would be in good enough shape to finish, but between the carpet pad staples, the old "alligator skin" linoleum tiles, and years of rot from leaky pipes, most of it was too bad to even try. Those linoleum tiles were on the floor in the entry, living room, dining room, and both bedrooms, beneath carpeting in all but the entry which had new tiles on top.

The walls were all framed in rough fir, 2x4 on the exterior walls and 2x3 on the interior walls. Most of the headers were 2x stock doubled up horizontally, often without trimmer studs at either end, and of these, many had been hacked up for various remodels over the years. The same mentality as the bathroom floor joists! There was no tar paper beneath the siding, and yet there was little evidence of water damage inside the walls, except where the rain gutter had deteriorated over the dining room alcove, and around the chimney chase in the attic. Except for the back porch and the bathroom, and the wainscotting in the kitchen and pantry, the main floor walls had all been lath and plaster originally. The ceiling in the front bedroom had been replaced with poorly-applied sheetrock, (perhaps because of water damage to the plaster from a leaky roof) and a number of doorways had been rocked over too.

From what I could decipher, the plaster had been painted in the living, dining, kitchen, and back bedrooms, and papered in the front bedroom and entry.

The kitchen was a rich yellow, the back bedroom was green with raspberry above the crown molding; I did not find any remains of the other painted walls to tell their color. One wall in the back bedroom had been covered with a Seagram's whiskey billboard paper. The wall paper was a flower pattern in the entry, and a combination of vertical stripes and flowers in the front bedroom.

The ceilings are an amazing framing detail. 2x4's span from the north and south walls to the central bearing wall, and another layer of 2x4's crosses these at right angles. All are on a 16" o.c. layout. From looking at it, it appeared grossly inadequate to carry the load of another floor above. When we removed the kitchen wall separating the porch/pantry, we were concerned about the cut-out for the old access panel in the ceiling to the crawl space within the edge of the roof: the already-shaky-looking structure appeared ready to come down. But I got up in the corner of the back bedroom, up there on the third floor, and jumped around, and there was virtually no shaking. Part of the reason that this system works is that most of the load up there is distributed close to the central bearing wall on the main floor, because the slope of the roof cuts off the rooms around 6' from the perimeter. Also, this illustrates the strength gained by tying together divergent members. We threw in a small header across the kitchen ceiling where the old pantry/porch wall used to be anyway, if nothing else, to assure extra strength there should I ever remove the hipped end of the roof there and build a gable in its place, expanding the back bedroom there to the back wall.

There were plenty of signs of infestations all over the place. I found termite tubes near the front of the house in the basement framing, especially near the front porch. The stucco that was applied ran right on down to the ground, and there were plenty of termite highways running up underneath it into the framing. I found several termite stalactites hanging down under the porch framing, along the junction of the original framing and the rebuilt framing. I wonder if the porch was rebuilt because of termites (although rot is too common a cause of porch rot to rule out. Even the present porch's 2x6 t&g flooring is beginning to rot in one corner.) The uncanny thing about the termites is that they are all gone, even though their highways were completely serviceable. Chlordane, just recently banned by the EPA, is certainly the culprit. Jane Spangler pointed out the trail of white powder along the capped foundation wall and said that it was chlordane. Lasts a

lifetime, kills termites effectively, and causes cancer in humans, even when applied "properly".

The termites were not the only critters to be bombed. The mortise locksets in the doors are filled with cockroach bodies. Same thing behind the door casings. I was cutting off the bottom 3/4" of a casing in the kitchen to fit the maple flooring underneath it. When I pulled the cutoff away, cockroach bodies began pouring out of the bottom like beans in a food bin.

There are signs of boring beetle infestations in the joists under the main bathroom, below the old hearth, and in a few boards under the added-on back porch. Very selective, those bugs. One piece of wood was well-munched, the next was untouched. Jane said that they have a short life cycle: something in the order of 30 days. They come in epidemics, striking around the neighborhood in a big wave, then disappearing for years. The whole thing about tenting a house and fumigating with methyl bromide is a bit of a scam. It kills what beetles may be in the house at the time, but it does nothing to stop a new infestation next month. Most of the holes were dark, signalling an old infestation, but a few were light, with fresh powder. One stud which we tore out in the basement was infested. I cut sections to look at the extent of the boring and it was 3/4" at most. I chose to let it all be, since none of the infected joists were deeply penetrated.

There were patches of rot all around the house. I already mentioned the front porch boards, the dining room alcove framing, and the wall paneling in the attic bedroom next to the chimney. Leaky fixtures over the years took quite a toll on the floors. After the pantry was closed off to the kitchen and included as part of the porch, that wall was used for the sink in the kitchen, and maybe for the washing machine in the porch. The floor on both sides of the wall was so rotten, I put my foot right through it with very little force. For some time the back wall of the porch was used for the washer and drier, and here too the flooring was decayed, although not so badly. The bathroom floor displayed a trail of toilets and sinks circling all around, each leaky fixture contributing its fair share to the general rot all about. We removed all the rotten flooring, except for a few fingers reaching into the back bedroom when we rebuilt the joists there, and replaced it with plywood.

And speaking of structural decay, the burnt rafters in the peak of the roof deserve mention, although we have done nothing to hide this from posterity. All of the tops of the rafters down the peak of the roof are well-charred, and much of the skip sheathing nearest the top was replaced. At first we suspected an electrical fire, judging from the quality of the old knob-and-tube wiring, but upon tearing out the chimney, the chairing seemed to reach down to the chimney, as if a blazing yule had gotten a wee bit too merry. Indeed, the chimney was dismal. It was divided into two flues, each 8"x8", hardly the size for a good fireplace draw. It was constructed of weak mortar, easily crumbled, a single brick thick, and with no terra cotta lining. A fire trap for sure.

ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING

The original house had no electricity, as I mentioned above. I do not know when it was installed, but it has been rewired at least four times, including twice by us. There was a fair amount of knob and tubing running up to and in the attic. The original fuse box may have been up underneath the front porch, where there is a small hinged awning door. However, most of the house was on armored cable when we got the place. There was a permit card from the city of Oakland nailed up near the fuse panel which was dated 1949. This would have been when the BX was put in. 60 amps, 6 circuits, fed by #8 wire. One circuit fed the single wall outlet in each of the main floor bedrooms; another circuit fed all of the lights and outlets in the attic. Not a very balanced load, but in general it was a decent wiring job. Before we found the burnt rafters around the chimney, we suspected that the fire had occurred in 1949, and motivated the owners to get rid of the antiquated system.

If the subsequent owners had been content with the last rewiring, everything would have been much better. But alas, as we followed the wiring system down, we found one potential disaster after another: romex spliced into knob and tube wires without junction boxes, hot knob and tube wires severed in the walls without even tape or wire nuts, not to mention disconnecting them first, grounding wires were often cut off (although occasionally they were thoughtfully wrapped around a screw or the outside of the outlet box), most of the outlets had the hot and neutral leads reversed, and even where junction boxes were used, connectors were often skipped. It is fortunate that the house never burned down.

To get a new 100 amp service, we needed to get the city's approval, and thus I got a permit for the new panel. Frank Skiles is the field inspector for the area. He knows his stuff, but he can play games and lean on you if he doesn't like you. A wily old guy. He approved the service panel, but wanted to see the rest of the house while he was at it. "It's the only chance I'll ever get to get inside this place." We, of course, were going to replace everything in the course of the work, but not until we had torn off the plaster and moved all of the walls around. So Skiles made us bring everything up to code, and it took him a number of visits before we realized that he wanted us to completely redo the whole thing. His instructions at first were a bit vague, probably so he could find out just what kind of an electrician Fredde is. But then, he had good reason to be uptight, judging from the horrible condition of the existing system. After his last (and passing) visit, we asked him if this sort of thing is common place, and he assured us that he had seen places much worse than this, all too frequently. That was the third wiring for the house. And then, in the following weeks, Fredde rewired it a last time, putting in nearly a third of a mile of #12 romex.

Plumbing is not so immediately dangerous as electricity, but the system was equally haphazard and illogical. As I mentioned above, gas may have been the only original plumbing. We did not remove any of the old gas lines in the main floor ceiling, and I even left a nipple protruding below the surface of the entry ceiling for an historical reference (only to be floated over with mud later on.) The tangle of galvanized pipes in the basement tells a tale of many additions and changes in the plumbing. Jane pointed out the wiggly pipes in the back wall of the basement. They were almost certainly old gas lines salvaged from buildings in San Francisco after the earthquake. A plumbing contractor in Oakland apparently scored large amounts of the material (Jane knew his name) for a rapidly expanding demand at the time for running water among the middle class. He straightened the pipes (well, sort of) and sold it all around the East Bay. Although I removed hundreds of feet of old rusty pipe from the house, I did let those wiggly ones remain. There was little else worth saving. There were lines with unions upon els and tees, feeding lines that were capped off at the ends or doubled back on themselves. The shut off valve was shoved up next to a joist and the top plate, buried behind some sheet rock and rendered inoperable. The dead end lines told a tale of migrating kitchens

and bathrooms, leaving rotten floors and miscellaneous holes in the walls behind them.

The first bathroom was placed outside, underneath the stairs descending from the back porch. Several old faucets still protrude from the wall there, and a now-filled floor flange is still set in the concrete where the toilet once stood. Then the bathroom was moved to the wide hall between the two bedrooms on the main floor, but the toilet was placed in at least two, if not three locations around the small room. Three holes in the north wall of the large attic room suggest that there was once a sink in there too.

The kitchen sink, of course, was once in the pantry, but was later moved into the kitchen, perhaps when the pantry door was closed off and the porch was expanded to include the pantry. The kitchen also housed the water heater originally. It sat up on the shoulder of the chimney, and couldn't have been more than 20 gallons, judging from the space it had. Its only remains were the mass of pipes, tees, unions and els clustered up near the ceiling back in the chimney wall, and the tall cabinet doorway that opened into the space. Unless the kitchen was replastered for the installation of the water heater, this might suggest that the house was built with water originally.

The washing machine may have been placed in the back of the basement originally, but at some point was moved up to the expanded porch/pantry room, using the old kitchen sink plumbing. However, Rosey was using the basement once again when we bought the house. We found an old galvanized vent pipe in the back wall when we opened it up that had a bulb-shaped lead connector at the bottom, about 4 feet off the floor. I have no idea what that was for. There was already a cast iron drain and vent stack on the outside of the back wall which I presume was the original vent.

The sewer line was the worst part of the plumbing. Made with 2 foot sections of terra cotta pipe, it began at the stack by the bathroom, followed the outside perimeter of the foundation back to the rear of the house, around to the driveway side, and on down to the street. Such a long path had a shallow slope through the first part of its run, although once along the driveway it gets better. At the kitchen drain wye, at the SW corner of the house, it had dropped only about and inch; it dropped about 2 feet more by the time it reached the sidewalk. We discovered its shortcomings when we began to pull out the brick foundation along

the north side of the house. One of the laborers had just returned from overseas and was infected with some sort of intestinal parasite that caused, among other things, unpredictable bursts that sent her running to the toilet. With every toilet flush our new trench began to fill with water. I disconnected the toilet completely and poured a lot of clorox into the trench. The kitchen wye was no better. The sinks (remember that Rosey had added a second kitchen in the dining room, and the drain for that sink ran along the basement wall and connected to the washing machine drain with a backwards tee) and laundry drain was a mismatched conglomerate of galvanized, ABS and cast iron pipe with fittings installed backwards or omitted altogether. The ground around the wye was covered over with some masonite, probably to try and hide the foul mess. I dug up the ground and sludge that surrounded the connection to the clay pipe, finding hundreds of earth worms and gobs of primordial ooze. My apologies to the Worm God, but another half gallon of clorox went into that pit.

As I mentioned above, the original toilet was placed along the back of the house, directly on top of the sewer line. There was also a water drain cast in the concrete around the NW corner that fed directly into the sewer line. It was convenient for draining rainwater but was bad news for the water company.

To frost the cake, so to speak, the kitchen drain vent extended up about an inch, and the 4" ABS vent for the toilets reached almost to the rain gutter, but was not strapped or secured in any way, left to wobble as it pleased.

I would have liked to have replaced the whole sewer line down to the sidewalk, but not having permit and being conscious of extra expenses, when we located the sewer at the sidewalk over 3 feet deep, we elected to tie in with the new system at the driveway beneath the kitchen windows. The part of the existing line along the driveway has plenty of slope to it and it was just too much to dig inconspicuously.

Our new sewer line begins with a plastic tree outside the bathrooms (cast iron is code in Oakland, but it would cost us $600 more) and turns straight through the foundation and under the slab, collecting drains from the new laundry, bathroom, shop sink, and the kitchen sink, all with a healthy slope to it. Before it joins the old clay pipe we added a clean out too.

The bathtub and toilet in the basement were from the main bathroom, and the sink and cabinet came from the kitchen. They do just fine for a darkroom. The fixtures in the main bathroom are most all salvage. The bathtub and toilet came from Berkeley Architectural Salvage, as did the marble. The tub is from an old hotel in Oakland, dating from the 'teens. It had been hanging around B.A.S. for a long time, just waiting for someone with a 3-sided, 6 foot enclosure. For $240, I have no complaints. The toilet is also from about the same period. Who knows were or when the tank came from. The bidet is new, but who cares.

OWNERS

I have assembled only a sketchy picture of the past ownership. I have misplaced the notes that I took at the County Recorder's Office last fall. Rosey Hines bought the house with her husband in May, 1979. Willie next door told me that he left her early on. They bought the house from Cornelius and Sammie Lee Harris who apparently did much of the recent remodeling (such as stuccoing the exterior and building the back porch). They bought the house in June, 1973, for around $9,000. They had lived around the corner at 1156 55th Street before they bought this house. Before them, the house was rented out, "mostly Mexicans" according to Willie. It was owned by John E. and Ella Holmes. They bought the house in February 1965 for $5,300 from Albert Uskoski. Mrs. Campbell who lives on the corner of 55th and Marshall said that it was lived in by Finns from when she and her husband moved into the neighborhood in 1947 until 1965. It was her understanding that Uskoski had lived in the house for a long time: grew up, raised a family, and died there too. As a footnote, she said that when they bought their house in 1947, this area was red lined for blacks. Her skin is very light for a black, which probably explains how they were able to buy their house at the time. She said that in the 40's the area was mostly owned but Scandinavians and Italians.

WORKERS

Fredde Butterworth did all of the rewiring, much of the framing, and most of the sheetrock finishing in the house. However, his skills are much wider. He was Lotte Rose's contractor for 3 or 4 years, in charge of many renovations in this neighborhood for her, giving many of these old and un-cared for houses a new lease on life. I worked with him on a number of these, including the backyard cottage right across the street; we've worked together in the Ashram and for Canyon Construction too, going back to 1981.

Mikal Baker is another seasoned carpenter from this neighborhood. He and Lisa renovated their house at 5956 Fremont Street, in many ways like we have been doing ours, with one major exception: they moved in first and then began the fixing up. It took them four years instead of four months. But it is a fine piece of craftsmanship, too. I had the honor of working on his house for five months last year. Mikal installed the alarm for us, laid most of the maple flooring, and did most of the interior trim for us. He also kept the boys in line while I was out and about on errands.

Phil Stoltz, our trusty plumber. Probably the best in the neighborhood. He lives down on 55th Street and showed up at irregular intervals to complete a connection or run some new line. His inexhaustible sense of humor barely out-weighed his frantic schedule and disposition. Included in Phil's assemblage are Richard, his 18th helper in as many months, and Paul Mann, a seasoned plumber in need of work who filled in on the sub-slab waste lines.

John Breen lived in the house during most of the work, generally homeless and a mind fried by drugs. However, he knows construction well enough to help out. A hot floor-layer and not too bad a plumber either.

Pete Eriksson lives on Fremont Street, one of the up-and-coming apprentices in the neighborhood. He worked on the house during most of the early stages and then steadily through the sheetrock, skylights, trim and finish.

Joel Bridgeman also lives on Fremont Street, in our little house near 62nd Street, a fine apprentice carpenter with strengths in the field of finish work. Among other things, he installed all the new windows.

Jim Schubert lives in the ashram and did labor work on days he was not at USF. He dug out loads of bricks, wheeled tons of dirt, stacked a lot of lumber, sponged sheetrock and figured in on every other part of the work.

Bruce Hayward was a Lear Jet pilot but wanted to find out if construction would be more his dharma. He recently bought the small apartment complex on the corner of Stanford & Vallejo, built in 1889 or there about, which was once a train station.

Anthon Boykin didn't last long. An inner city black teenager with a quiet and sweet disposition and some potential for work, he landed in jail shortly after the foundation was done and didn't show up again until the house was nearly done.

Charles Partee is Anthon grown up. A real character, he showed up after a year's absence (parole fugitive) so I had him finish clean the bricks.

Jeff Miller was working on Lotte's garage in the yard behind us and came over for miscellaneous labor tasks. Our token Hippie.

Joël works with Fredde a lot, a Guatemalan refugee, devout Christian, and a harder worker than all the other laborers combined. He put in some long hours on the jack hammer out on the driveway.

Megan Kincaid, neighbor across the street and painting contractor. A bit wild and fun, she headed up the painting including a great one-day eight-worker finish painting extravaganza. She brought along assorted crew members Debbie and Carolyn.

Lee Parker lives with Megan and is also a professional painter, but is working her way out of the trade. She jumped in on the finish painting and also took on the front door and the hours of touch up at the end.

Danny Long and Stephan Whitesides built the kitchen cabinets. I've known them for almost 10 years now, since they used Tom Whiteside's shop in Canyon. I've done a few jobs with them and I knew they'd turn out top quality work.

Narayan Ihli installed the forced air furnace. He was always the young kid on the ashram construction crews who broke off into the world as an HVAC man. He gave me a good price for the job, using a nearly-new furnace that Paul Mann supplied.

Willie O. Jones lives next door and hauled a lot of the construction trash away. He's lived there since 1963, and raised a family there too. He's always friendly and eager to help, although he is incredibly slow: he certainly walks to a different drummer. He took away the piles of useless sheetrock that we removed from the basement, but soon after that we got into wholesale demolition and went with a succession of Oakland Scavenger dumpsters. By the time our over-fills were accounted for we put away well over 100 cubic yards of debris. But once we were into the finish work he kept the piles collected regularly. His backyard is in plain view of our deck and kitchen and it is a sight of squalor to behold, but he doesn't let any of that spill onto us or our friendship. A good man.

Danny Deremiah is Carolynn's sister's boyfriend. He is studying electrical engineering at a local college and got some hands-on experience here. He helped Fredde rewire the house the first time, to Mr. Skiles' satisfaction. Under the sharp eye of the inspector is indeed a good way to learn.

Moriasiem was a friend of a friend, in need of work and willing to give anything a try. She dug out the old foundation for a few days before she took quite ill, and she never returned.

Darrel Gaither laid the linoleum upstairs and the carpeting. Boy, what a character! A red-neck vet from Pittsberg, CA, who loves to hunt and complain about bleeding-heart liberals. His bumper stickers read: "People who want to outlaw guns should be shot" and "Forget the dog, beware of the owner". A good hard worker and I enjoyed his brief presence on the job.

Wayne Ulrich hung the drywall with a helper, Mark. They are regular employees of the great Jerrell Jones in Fremont. Fast and eager for more work.

OUR WORK

We would like to restore the whole house to its Queen Anne dignity, but we had to stop at the interiors, with only a few urgent exterior details completed. We bought the house for $90,000 and the work has cost another $65,000. To remove the stucco, rehabilitate the redwood siding below and return a few nice details (such as a gable sunburst) to their places, build a nice deck, replace the rest of the windows with insulated glazing, build a new fireplace (or at least install a wood-burning stove), re-roof (I would love to go with copper if it weren't for the $40,000 cost), extend the west roof face out into a gable, and nicely finish the basement would just plain cost too much right now. But we did do major work, as far as we went.

The foundation work has already been described. We also did the first rewiring early on, to complete our involvement with the city. (Because property taxes go up in direct proportion to the amount you spend on improvements, we chose to do this work under the table as much as possible. It was the source of a lot of anxiety at various times, since there could have been dire consequences for me and Phil, since we are both licenced contractors.) Once we were signed off we began the demolition in earnest, from the kitchen's mosaic floor tiles to the plaster on all walls (except the front bedroom's) to the walls between the back porch and the kitchen, between the back porch and the bedroom, and between the bathroom and the "ante room"/hallway. The chimney came down and we rebuilt its dining room wall (it was all chopped up; even now it isn't all that strong.) We rebuilt the pocket door walls, closed in the ante room doors to the kitchen and front bedroom, closed in the door from the front bedroom to the "closet" below the stairs (formerly a door to the entry room), re-opened the door from the living room to under the stairs (also formerly to the entry and now to the stairs to the basement), rebuilt the wall between the bathroom and the back bedroom, rebuilt the bathroom floor, headed off the old

pantry/porch wall and the kitchen/chimney wall, and we framed a bedroom closet into the kitchen and replaced the back door and porch and pantry windows with the double doors. Meanwhile we dug out the dirt on the north side of the basement, laid the new plumbing waste line, put down some sub base, plastic, mesh, and then concrete. This was followed by all of the new framing in the basement.

While we were at it we made some major structural improvements, especially with earthquakes in mind. Of course the new foundation added several hundred years to the life of the building by positively locking it into the ground. Since the capped brick foundation along the driveway has anchor bolts, it is acceptable for its strength. The intermediate piers were simply brick with the 4x4 posts floating on top of them. Most of these piers had already been poured around by a previous slab pour and I didn't want to bother messing with them. However, the 4 closest to the west end were floating free, so I dug them out and installed a grade beam beneath the, continuous with the slab we poured. This footing is the reason for the mound along the hall in the basement. We anchored the top plates to the foundation with threaded rod and used heavy-duty Simpson tie-downs to anchor the floor joists to the basement wall. Apparently the junction between the plate and the floor joists is the most common point of failure in an earthquake. On joists between the tie-downs we put hurricane ties, alone insufficient for earthquakes but good measure along with the tie-downs. The joists had cross bridging in two rows on either side of the intermediary girder, but none at the girder, so we threw in a line of blocks over the girder too. For shear strength we put up plywood on the post & girder wall, and on the crossing walls by the water heater and the guest bedroom. The upstairs was framed with diagonal braces at the corners, a modest and adequate design, so we did nothing more to it.

Against Jane Spangler's suggestion we insulated all exterior walls that we opened up, the floor above the basement (as much for shop noise as for heat), and as much of the attic as we could. I hired a couple of Jerrell Jones' men to hang and tape drywall, and Fredde, Pete and I did the finishing. Megan and Debbie worked hard to restore the plaster ceilings in the living and dining rooms which were cracked, crumbling, and sparkled. We indulged in buying a plaster medallion from San Francisco Victoriana for the dining room ceiling, a design called Queen Anne. The original house

had no such embellishment, I'm sure, but it certainly seems to fit in.

For moldings we took a sample of the original door casing to S.F. Victoriana and had several hundred feet of it milled in redwood for us. We had salvaged as much of the existing casings as we could (except for the clam-shell which we threw out) and ended up using it in the basement and the third floor. The wainscotting, base cap and picture mould are all stock items which we judged appropriate.

We bought a fair amount of materials from salvage yards around the East Bay. The maple flooring was bought from Wesco in Richmond. It was probably from some industrial building because of its high figuring and oil stains; all the more beautiful as far as I am concerned. All of the double-glazed windows and doors came from Urban Ore in Berkeley, which rarely deals in new quality goods such as these. The frosted globe light fixtures also came from there. Berkeley Architectural Salvage provided much of the master bathroom materials: the marble slabs (which came from a bank in Oakland), the toilet, and the bathtub (from a hotel in Oakland, from around 1915). Stuart and Rae Smith up the street gave us the stove, which they removed when they moved in. Wellbilt is said to have gone out of business 35 years ago (1953) but a date stamped on the clock motor says 3-55. Aside from a lot of cleaning and assorted missing trim, it only needed a new valve for the rotisserie.

The light fixtures came from various places. We decided to splurge on the dining room, the room with the greatest need for elegance. The sconces and chandelier were made by Classic Illuminations in Berkeley, their 1904 model. We had to settle for the cheapest of imitations for the rest of the downstairs, mostly Home Club and Yardbird's run-of-the-mill. I put a fixture in my office that came from my parents' house on Ocean View Drive, from 1913. The living room sconces, while solid brass, are cheap Brazilian imitations, from Sunrise Salvage in Berkeley.

The carpet came from a remnant clearing house in Richmond, Tradeways. The wool Berbers in the bedroom and office were in perfect condition, and the nylon plush upstairs had some minor irregularities. When it gets down to the end of the job and the funds start running low, good deals such as these are hard to pass up.

Subject: Changes in the neighborhood

From: Nextdoor Golden Gate District (reply@rs.email.nextdoor.com)

To:

Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2015 12:23 PM

Seth Melchert, Golden Gate District

The end of an era.

We live on Marshall St near 55th. We moved here 27 years ago, and while we have seen many neighbors move in and out, it has always been a diverse assemblage racially and demographically. Last weekend our neighbor on one side put his home up for sale, a house his father bought in 1963, a house that he himself grew up in. Dozens if not hundreds of prospective buyers have come through these last few days, almost entirely white, and it just struck me, he is the last black homeowner on our street. It is quite a guttural impact on me, and I realize that this is one of those historic transitional moments in a neighborhood's evolution.

For one, I realize that my wife and I are the second longest current owners on our block now, the longest being our other neighbor, an artist who bought the factory next door in 1974 for his studio. All of a sudden, there are no "elderly foundational" households anymore, people who have watched the generations pass, nor younger families whose parents or grandparents originally lived here. Suddenly my wife and I are no longer among the new arrivals. (Please, we are NOT "elderly foundational"!)

There have been numerous waves of change in this neighborhood. For one, this was once a red-lined area where blacks were not allowed to live. On the corner of 55th and Marshall the first black family bought in, in 1947 (they surmise that because the wife's skin was relatively light she was mistaken for southern European). The demographic shift must have been rapid after that. My artist neighbor reports that the factory he bought was closed because the workers felt unsafe with the amount of drug pushing and prostitution that were rampant on this block. There was literally a dozen bars and night clubs within a 1 block radius. The pink apartment on 55th at the end of Marshall was "The House of Joy", a renowned Jazz club where the likes of Louis Armstrong played. Professor Ed Blakely once noted that this neighborhood sported the highest concentration of churches anywhere in the East Bay. It was deeply black, impoverished and depressed, and it yet it also had a vital identity. When my artist neighbor bought in, there were only 2 white families on the block, Jean-Baptiste Biancero (moved here in the 1920's) and Gil and Alice Davidson (1930's). They have long since passed.

The next big change was the Siddha Yoga Ashram's buying the Stanford Hotel in 1975 which was up to then the center of the prostitution and drug dealing. Almost overnight the worst of the dealing moved to around 27th & San Pablo. A big wave of white and middle class people bought in to the neighborhood, my wife and I included. The coming of Pixar and Emeryville's development in general brought another minor wave. However somehow this neighborhood always felt slightly insulated from the changes sweeping the Bay Area and remained demographically diverse, and it was not until the recession and really the last 3 years that I have felt the biggest shudder of gentrification ripple through the neighborhood. I remember Joe Banchero (as we called Jean-Baptiste) laughing at me incredulously for paying $90,000 for our house; now I myself shake my head in disbelief at what people are willing/having to pay for a house; I would certainly not be able to afford to buy here anymore.

Just this morning I read an impassioned email posted on the SPAGGIA list that included a call to resist gentrification. This is a good slogan, but really, how is that done? Someone noted to me recently that the Bay Area has added 400,000 new jobs since the Great Recession, but has added almost no new housing. What is sweeping our neighborhood is simply an expression of those economic forces, and unless housing were provided freely by society and removed from the market of capitalism, this is the natural result. I suppose there are a few investors looking at my neighbor's house, but most of the visitors we have seen have been couples, families, desperate to find housing they can afford.

So change happens, and we adapt. Part of adapting is recognizing the impact, which is what I am doing right now. Also, within those changes are stories of people who lived, thrived, struggled, served, cared, aspired. Another part of adapting is to speak about those lives, those communities; knowing the history helps us become rooted here ourselves. My wife and I were recently interviewed by local artist Sue Mark who is collecting stories from this neighborhood, to preserve them artistically. This post is perhaps a continuation of the conversation we had with her, and is offered to this whole community, that we may all know the history and trajectory of this place, that we may be good neighbors, compassionate with one another, and that we may take responsibility for being here as citizens.

Seth Melchert

Feb 4 in General to your neighborhood

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from Golden Gate District **4 Feb**

Thats a real nice story,thanks. I've only been here about 63 yrs. and remember maybe 6 bars around here,with 3 of them being caddycorner on Marshall and Powell,with a couple on San Pablo Ave. That was many many years back.There's tons of new housing about 4 or 5 blocks from where you live,but you have to have a pretty good job to afford them.Property here is exploding in price,because of the demographics of where we are,easy to get to S.F and so on. There probably will be no changing of the way things are going,a diverse new group of people with good jobs are willing to pay the price for living here.How does a .home owner resist getting in value what he/she can for their house around here? I've seen the bidding going on,$250K for some homes above the asking price,unreal,but if you have worked .your tail off all your life for what you have,congrats on your new found wealth....I am wondering what the selling price will be on the Marshall St. place,I believe,if it's the same place it was listed for $425K,with one selling right across the street not long ago for quite a bit more,also with a lower asking price.Again thank you for all the memories you have brought back!!

from Golden Gate District **4 Feb**

Thank you so much for the heartfelt and informative writing! My daughter and I ride down your street many times per week as it's part of the safe-ish route I've found between our house and her school. (We're on a bike and mono-wheel trailer bike.) I love Marshall street, particularly your block and the one just on the other side of Powell/Stanford. You can tell there are a lot of well-loved houses there!

from Golden Gate District **4 Feb**

This is a wonderful reminiscence/assessment. Thanks for sharing it.

from Golden Gate District 4 Feb

such is gentrification; once it gets rolling the flipping of houses rapidly speeds up, as well as the movement of people thru them. even when people want to stay the fast cash incentives become much. truly, you have lived here in one of its golden eras. thank you for sharing.

from Golden Gate District 4 Feb

I spoke with a worker at Berkeley Hort. yesterday who, when he found out where I lived, said he had lived on 55th for awhile before moving to El Cerrito and wished he hadn't done so, as he much preferred the North Oakland neighborhood and ease of public and bike transportation. He didn't say why he had moved in the first place. Then there was the Afram young man who drove me home several years ago from a car rental place who, when he turned off San Pablo to get to my house, was aghast and said "This is the kind of place I moved to Benicia to escape!" So - all kinds of people and lots of reasons are involved in moving away. It's not just for easy house flipping money. Generations change and the next doesn't want to stay in the neighborhood, or, as has happened near me, in order to split the inheritance evenly, the house had to be sold.
Thanks, Seth, for opening up this discussion. You did good.

from Golden Gate District 4 Feb

I have lived her nearly as long as Seth, My house used to belong to a drug dealer and people still stopped by the first year. There was rampant gang activity. I walked my dog out front and (i was on my own property) and a young man came up - a gun beneath his jacket - and said "I don't want to have to shoot your dog." I said, "She is always on a leash." Note we hadn't threatened or even noticed him. THAT doesn't happen anymore.
There was a gas station across from Syda Ashram - I pulled in there and tried to buy gas and

couldn't get the attention of the attendant - or whatever he was. I concluded it was some kind of front or Mafia front. And the Emeryville Police Chief was indicted for removing files - he had been a leader in the Alameda Demo. Party and was suspected of organized crime ties. The part of San Pablo by the Oaks Club was occupied by multiple gambling joints.
I commuted and liked my immediate neighbors, who made the first few years bearable. And the neighborhood has changed for the better over the last seven years or so in that there seems to be less drug traffic in my immediate neighborhood. And one of the mufti-generational drug using families on the next block sold their home - that helped calm down the neighborhood considerably. Now people are moving here from SF....
Several black neighbors have passed - some heirs have opted to sell the houses, other opted to occupy their parent's home - I'd say it's about 50-50. There is one new neighbor who is an obvious gentrifier. On this block and around the corner there are Latino, black, white, Asian. neighbors. I think the mix is healthy.And people knowing their neighbors is healthy. Friends from Sacramento are amazed at how we know our neighbors. (They don't.)

from Golden Gate District **4 Feb**

Seth as a resident of 55th street since 1977 I have also witnessed the change. As Raised all my children here, who now live on the other side of the hill. As much as the size of the complex going up at Hollis and Powell bothers me. That kind of density is the only solution.

from Golden Gate District **4 Feb**

Wonderful mail, thanks for taking the time to write it.

from Golden Gate District 4 Feb

Seth, thank you for writing this well thought out and correct observation. My family has lived in this neighborhood, Arlington Avenue, since 1945. Our daughter and I both grew up here. My parents and my husband passed away here. It is gratifying to here you say new comers basically should become part of the neighborhood learning about the area. My parents were the first African Americans on Arlington Avenue, the Spears, who have since passed away, and lived on the corner of Gaskill were here first. As other African Americans moved in people moved out not because they were bad people they were just African Americans. However, the neighborhood was a mixture of Blue Collar Workers and Professionals and there wasn't crime. We never locked our doors, and when we did we threw the key under the door mat! Of course, like most cities, some undesirables moved in bringing their bad habits with them. Despite this fact the police have said this neighborhood has not and is not bad like other areas of the city. We really do not have violent crimes, but break ins are on the rise. Again, thank you Seth for your insightful observation.

from Golden Gate District 4 Feb

Thanks Seth! Sarah and I are out of 55th at Fremont, the house is being sold...for more than we could afford to pay for a fixer upper ... We are grateful that the new house/landlord did not increase the rent on the new house, as many are doing..and that we can stay in the neighborhood we have called home for 25 years.

from Golden Gate District **4 Feb**

That was a great piece, Seth. I moved into Isabelita's current house in 1975 after it had just sold for $4.000. Of course, like you, I have seen tremendous changes take place since then and known some very endearing and colorful people. A stranger knocked on my door today. He was apparently looking at Gregory's house for sale. He wanted my opinion of the neighborhood. I told him that when I moved in here in 1975 you could hear gunfire twice a week at least. Now it is basically a gentrified neighborhood in San Francisco. He wanted to know if he could buy this place (no doubt to "flip" it). If I ever have to move from here I will probably have to move to Utah to be able to afford it. "Downtown" is engulfing us. Phil across the street.

from Golden Gate District **5 Feb**

Great comments, Seth. I have lived on 62nd street since 1976 or 77. Talk about change, whew! Some good, some bad. It was hell, at first, with all the drugs. Many old timers were being held captive by their drug addicted adult children, using the parents as a cover to run - a- muck. AND, the chop shops, wow. Damn near one on every block from Standford to Ashby. The police knew about 'em and were getting paid graff (sic?). It SUCKED eggs, big time. Many of the drug addicted young and older adults were (are still) are the moles for the police. the problem with that was (is) the police let them terrorize the neighborhood with drug sales as long as they gave up either some cash or some info that could lead to an arrest. A big change came with SPAGGIA

from Golden Gate District **5 Feb**

Oh wow! I wasn't finished. I joined SPAGGIA

from Golden Gate District **5 Feb**

Damn I keep hitting the wrong button. the first big change was FINALLY getting Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland Police, the Sheriff's department and the housing authority police to meet with us. What prompted this was a man was found dead on the walkway between the school and the baseball field. that body sat there ALL FLIPPN' DAY because the "authorities" argued over whose jurisdiction it was to handle the problem. Yeah, kids were in school. talk about a MESS. Criminals from Berkley would do their dirt in Berkeley and run across Alcatraz and they were free. Oakland criminals would do the same thing and run to Berkeley. Each law enforce agency would drop the ball and would not cooperate. It was crazy. We called for action. Hey, since I'm blowing the whistle, take note, if anything should happen to me..... I, too, talked with Sue Mark. I declined the video interview out of paranoia. I feel like with all the racial hate, racial profiling within our law enforcement agencies who can I trust???????

from Golden Gate District **5 Feb**

thank you for sharing the history, i am relatively new here and i try not to be a part of the problem. i children will grow up here, and i would like them to know were they are and to respect who came before them.thank you.

from Golden Gate District **5 Feb**

Thank you so much for writing this piece. I love reading about the personal histories of the folks that live(d) here and their experiences with the changing of the neighborhood. This area has a lot of heart and some lovely neighbors. I know we share a lot of material and event information on NextDoor, but the personal histories of the neighborhood are my favorite to read about. They make me feel even closer to the location and the people. So thanks again for sharing, Seth.

REFERENCE GUIDE

REFERENCE GUIDE

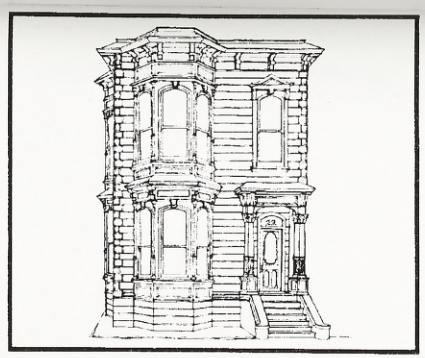
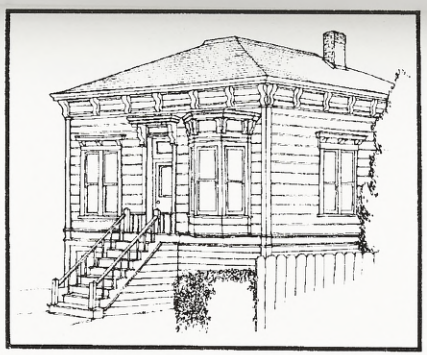
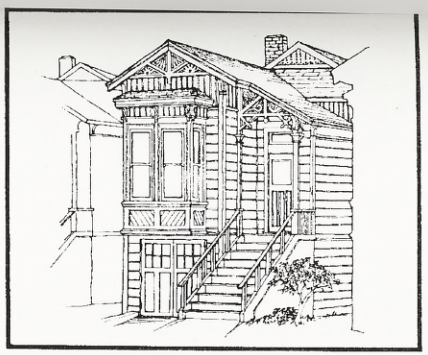


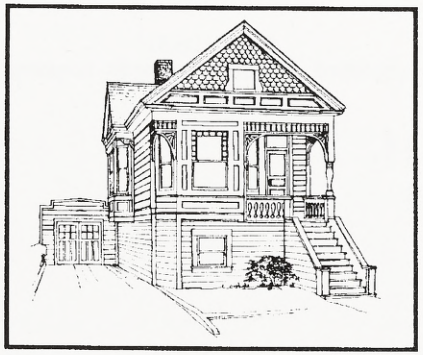
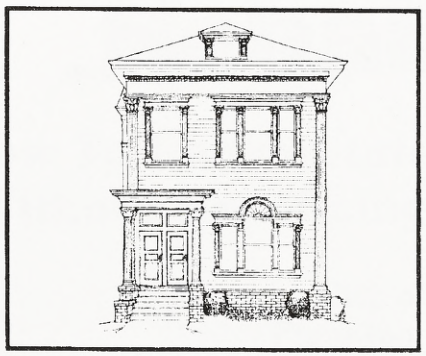
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Seth Melchert talking about renovation strategies during a neighborhood walking discussion, 2015

Photo by Lorah Gross

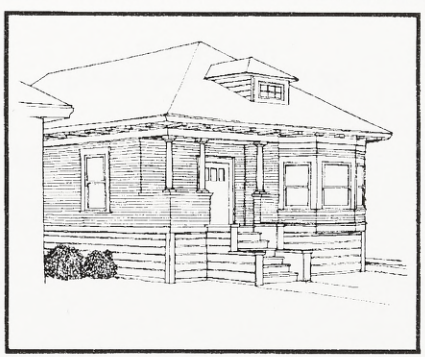
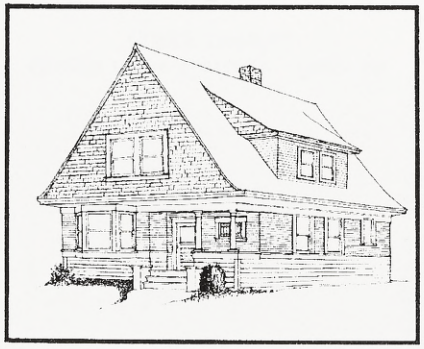


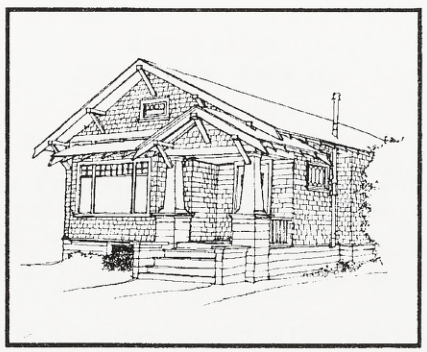
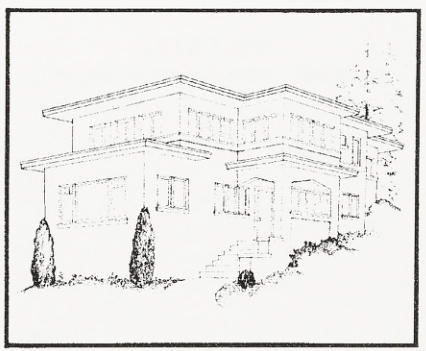
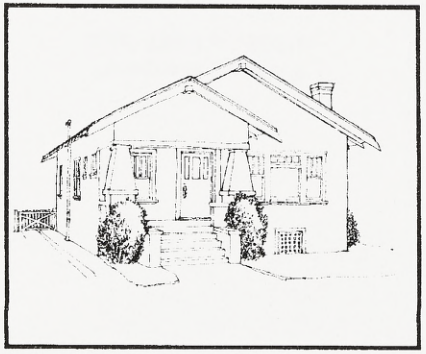
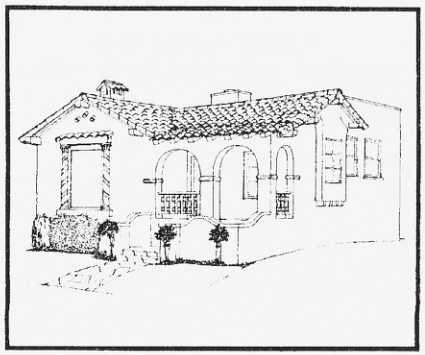
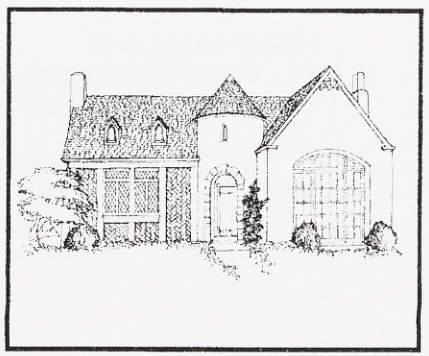
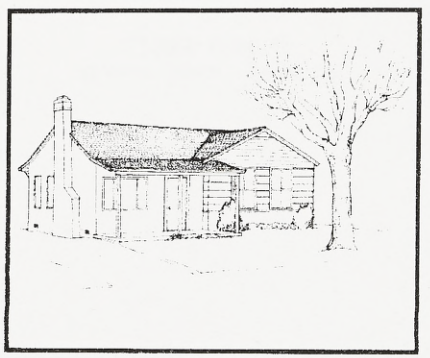




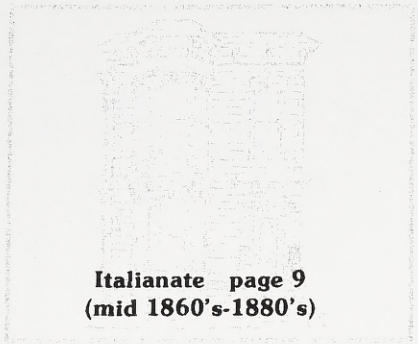



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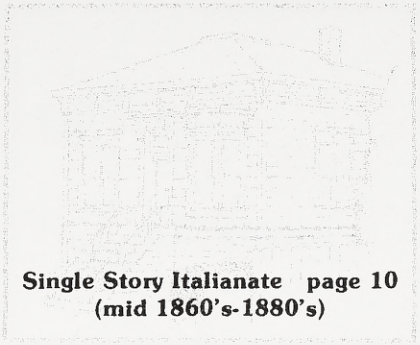
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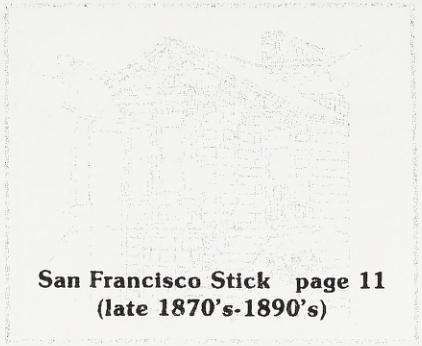









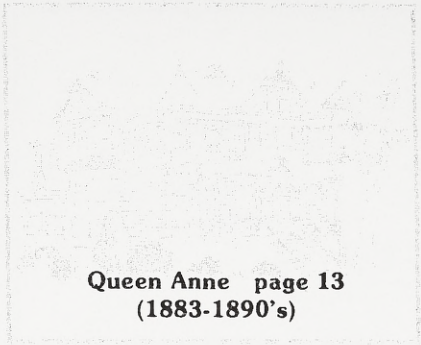
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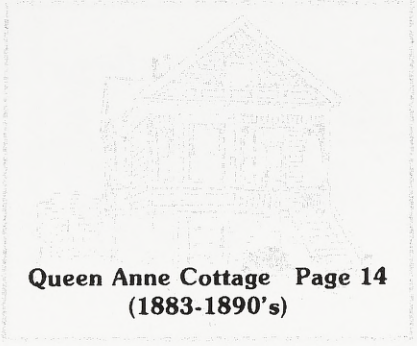
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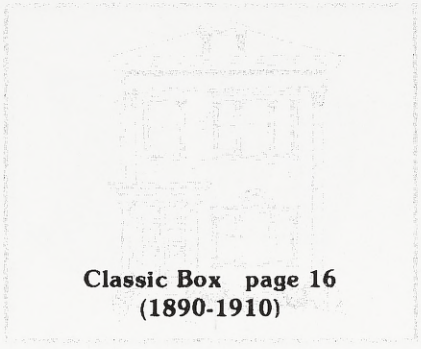
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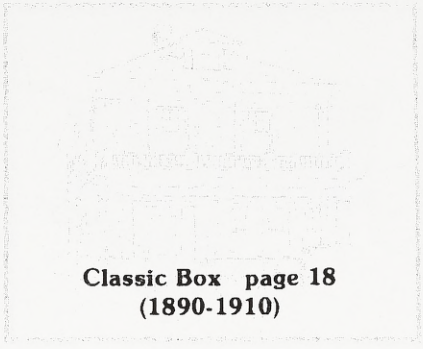
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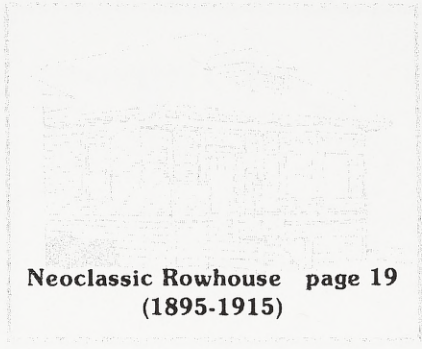
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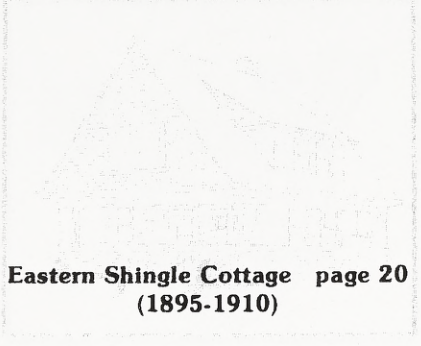
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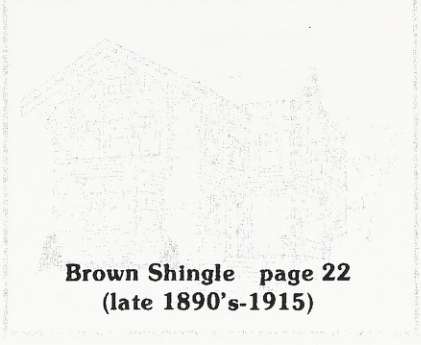
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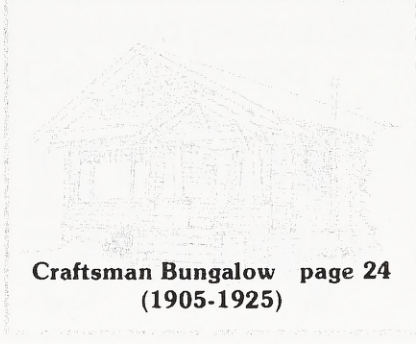
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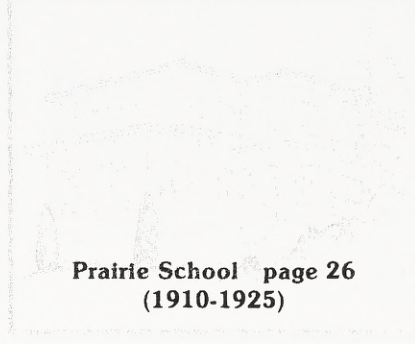
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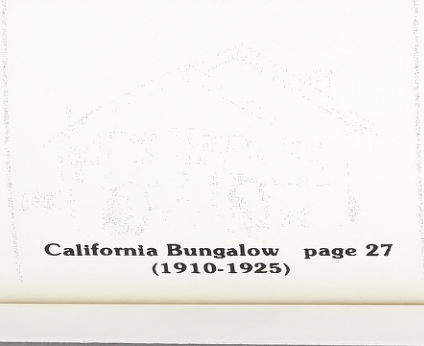
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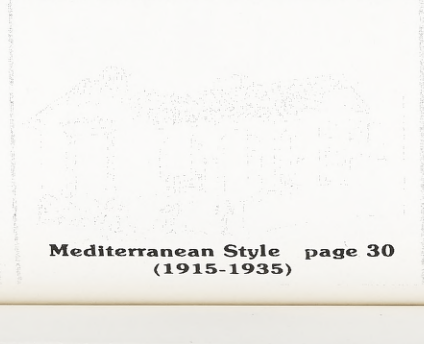
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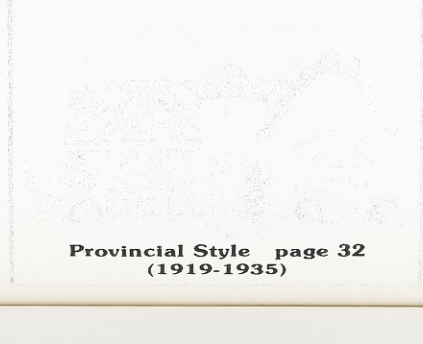
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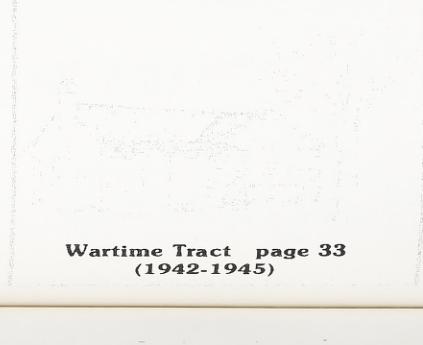
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Rehab Right

How To Rehabilitate Your Oakland House Without Sacrificing Architectural Assets

City of Oakland
Planning Department
June, 1978

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DISCLAIMER

REHAB RIGHT fills the gap in home repair literature left by conventional home improvement books (typically insensitive to architectural design) and by restoration manuals (usually cursory in their technical explanations). As a result, the instructions in REHAB RIGHT range from simple methods to complicated projects. In cases where adequate information is well presented in other readily available publications, reference has been so made to avoid repetition.

The difficulty factor depends on the experience of the reader. Whether novice or know-it-all, safety procedures should be observed, tools and materials properly cared for, and common sense the guiding light. Conditions in old houses vary, so it is up to the reader to adapt directions to the situation at hand. This is as much a matter of applying the philosophy of REHAB RIGHT as it is of skill at construction. Despite best efforts to be thorough, some questions will undoubtedly stand unanswered. A reader in doubt as to procedure or outcome should seek further advice or assistance. (Helpful sources are described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.)

The names of stores, suppliers and products are included solely to demonstrate that certain items which facilitate REHAB RIGHT methods are in fact available. No endorsement or warranty by the City, or by any of the supporting agencies, is expressed or implied. A listing does not suggest that the named supplier is the exclusive source or the least expensive source of any product. Prices quoted are subject to change without notice. For specific products, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

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PREFACE

In cities nationwide, popular interest in older houses has been directed toward historic restoration. Great sums have been invested in the re-creation of a landmark building's original features for the sake of academic precision and, often, for snob appeal. But too often, when a more commonplace house becomes deteriorated, most of the energy is directed toward just making the house liveable again. The goal is to eliminate hazardous conditions and to install basic amenities. Anything more is frosting.

While it is critical that the shelters be made habitable, it is equally imperative that the architectural character of all buildings be respected in the process of structural improvement. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case in Oakland. The intrinsic merit of a building is often sacrificed to the expediency of contemporary contracting technique.

This handbook was conceived as an easy-to-use guide to design decisions, in the hope that the architectural integrity of Oakland's homes will no longer be unnecessarily lost. A *good* design decision for a repair problem requires satisfactory answers to three straightward questions: How will it look? How will it work? And, how much will it cost? REHAB RIGHT addresses these questions for typical home improvement problems encountered in Oakland's older residential building styles.

There are so many different people who influence the outcome of residential rehabilitation projects in Oakland that this publication serves a variety of needs. Foremost, REHAB RIGHT is written for **Oakland homeowners.** Do you own a house here? Use this manual to discover the qualities your house has, the built-in design assets you may not even realize it boasts. These assets have resale value. Then, use this book to prepare for home improvement by recognizing which problems you have to solve and determining the best plan of attack. When you become acquainted with the technical jargon, you will be better equipped to communicate to a contractor or a hardware salesman that you want the job done the best way possible. Perhaps a previous owner made some so-called "improvements" and the changes are not to your liking. Use REHAB RIGHT to rectify past mistakes. On the larger scene, read this book to find out how the efforts of individual property owners can contribute to the upgrading of an entire neighborhood.

Maybe you are **potential Oakland homeowners,** looking for a place to buy. Lately, many people are drawn to Oakland by the design quality and human scale of older neighborhoods. REHAB RIGHT will help you evaluate houses that are for sale and make an intelligent selection among them. It should also give you some idea of any additional investment necessary beyond the sale price to bring the house up to legal standards or your own personal taste.

Real estate agents, eager to discover which features make a house marketable, will find REHAB RIGHT a useful tool in appraising the value of residential architecture and passing this knowledge on to the consumer. The characteristics that help sell the house this time should be retained by the new owner to help sell the house next time around.

Some people turn to **professional contractors** for advice on home improvement. While most contractors know how to get the job done, many could profit by more design sensitivity. REHAB RIGHT should stir the imagination of any skilled craftsperson. Esthetics notwithstanding, this booklet provides the contractor with a handy checklist of rehab problems.

Some **City employees** are in a position to design rehabilitation projects. Others review applications for special low interest rehabilitation loans. Still others must make daily decisions regarding code compliance, land use regulations, permit issuance, and the like. REHAB RIGHT is directed at honing City employees' appreciation of Oakland's distinctive residential styles, so that a professional understanding of local architecture is intrinsic to any related recommendations made in the City's name for the public good.

Actually, **any Oakland property owner** could benefit from REHAB RIGHT. Many of the design concepts apply equally well to commercial structures or apartment buildings. **Any Oakland resident** would broaden his or her environmental perception by learning to recognize different house styles by name. An awareness of Oakland's architectural heritage will foster common sense decisions about residential rehabilitation, and an enthusiasm for doing the job the right way.

Chapter 1.

THEY DON'T MAKE HOUSES LIKE THEY USED TO

LET YOUR HOUSE BE ITSELF

One of the very best things about Oakland is the vital mix of cultures among our resident population. There are so many different and interesting people, that living here is practically an international experience. The social diversity is stimulating, the way life in a city is supposed to be. Likewise, Oakland possesses a spectrum of residential building styles. Houses of strikingly different appearance—from 1875, 1905, 1935, 1965—stand side by side, creating a physical setting as variegated as Oakland's social environment.

Lately, individuals of many different ethnic backgrounds are intent upon discovering their "roots," tracing their cultural history. They value the role that the past has played in determining their personal identity; they treasure the unique qualities of a distinctive heritage. It is a disheartening realization that the integrity of so many a culture has been diluted in the great American melting pot, the valuable distinctions homogenized. So it is with architecture too. A house reflects history—the attidues, the technology, the spirit of the era in which it was built. Most houses built before World War II also reflect great care and quality in their craftsmanship and materials. Every house has its own personality, its own story to tell. What a shame that the integrity of so many an older house has been needlessly dishonored by modernization techniques which, like the melting pot, tend to make everything look the same.

Of course, most older houses are in need of some improvements to make them safe and convenient. But **you can make your living environment feel new without eliminating what is old and valuable.** Let's take the analogy between the residents and the residences of Oakland one step further. This is the generation of the natural look in personal grooming. The "natural look" does not mean sloppy or dirty, it means comfortable and honest, being yourself. Rosy cheeks come from being in the sun, not from a palette of rouge. Curly hair is no longer straightened, but allowed to wave, then cut to complement the shape of the face. The same principle of pride in basic features applies to home repairs; let your house be itself. You can freshen up without covering up.

There's a big difference between structural improvements and interior decoration. Structural improvements are home repairs related to the skeleton of the house—the floor you stand on, the roof over your head. They are architectural features which concern building and construction—the "nuts and bolts" that have a permanent importance for you and any subsequent owners of the house. REHAB RIGHT will help you to make and implement those important design decisions. Interior decoration, on the other hand, is more superficial and shorter lived. It is the selection of a wallpaper pattern—not the installation of wall studs; it's the selection of café curtains—not the replacement of a dryrotted window sill. Of course, effective interior decoration depends upon a good structural framework. Picking out a wardrobe for yourself is not the same as jogging around Lake Merritt to stay in shape, although everyone knows that a stylish outfit will look a lot better on a healthy physique.

While it is appropriate to use your individual taste in decorating your home, resist the temptation to impose your personality on the structure of the house. If, for example, you like vivid colors, consider hanging bright posters in the living room instead of painting the outside of the house a garish hue. If you have a collection of souvenirs from Mexico, you need not stucco your house, roof it with red tile, and surround it with white gravel to achieve an interesting display.

Think of your house as a whole, a single unit with no removable parts. Every change you make chips away at the integrity of the whole, every feature removed is drastic surgery. Before you know it, efforts to personalize and update a house will leave you with an assortment of miscellaneous parts that bear no relation to each other, let alone to the original design. Wrought iron columns, asbestos shingles, and aluminum frame windows have only one thing in common: the local hardware store. A house is not like a car which has options available to obscure the mass production. It's just the opposite: older houses in Oakland were built one at a time, and such added options obscure their individuality.

An article in the *Wall Street Journal* points out that because people invest such a large portion of their earnings in the purchase of a house they focus their leisure activities on the home too. Home improvement has become a form of recreation. Whether tools and lumber, brushes and buckets, are your idea of fun, or a matter of sheer necessity, be sure that the "improvements" you make respect the form and the materials of the original house. The spaces and details were deliberately arranged and selected for proportion and consistency when the house was first built. The design as a whole has a visual purpose and an economic value that are yours to appreciate, yours to safeguard, yours to benefit from when it's time to resell.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESTORE, REHABILITATE, AND REMODEL

There is so much activity these days in the improvement of older housing that a new set of verbs has been introduced into common parlance. Most of the words start with the prefix *re*—which means to begin anew, and it is not hard to become confused among the definitions. The variations in meaning between *restore, rehabilitate,* and *remodel,* may

seem subtle, but the words represent powerful attitudes which make all the difference in the way a job turns out.

To restore a house is to return a building to its original condition, as if it were a precious museum piece. This technique is typically used for structures of significant merit, like historic landmarks, where accuracy will serve an educational purpose as well as a visual one. Restoration is the most painstaking improvement process, and often the most expensive, because it requires technical skill and academic precision for successful results. It can involve the removal of extraneous, anachronistice elements, as well as the re-creation of original features which have become deteriorated or destroyed. For example, on a Victorian house, the wood portico may have succumbed to dry rot. In restoring the house, the replacement for the defective overhang would be an honest reproduction of the original—the same dimensions, the same joinery, even the same materials as its predecessor. An enormous challenge lies in accurately discovering the past and sensitively displaying that heritage in the present.

A fine example of a restoration project in Oakland is the Camron-Stanford House. This Italianate mansion built in 1876 on the shores of Lake Merritt, at Lakeside Drive, went through several incarnations: as the lavish residence of newlyweds Alice Marsh and Will Camron, as the lively hub of Josiah Stanford's social circle, as the headquarters for the Oakland Museum and, in what many feared would be its dying days, as an abandoned and desolate mansion dubbed "Lady of the Lake."

In 1971, through the efforts of the Camron-Stanford Preservation Association, the restoration project began. The needed repairs were substantial. The rear annex had to be demolished, and the interior walls reconstructed. When at last the Camron-Stanford house received a fresh and accurate paint job three years later, it was reinstated as a gem in the public eye. Beginning in the spring, 1978, the house will be headquarters for special programs on Oakland history, with an emphasis on residential architecture.

Remodelling a house is normally at the opposite end of the improvement spectrum from restoration. Unless it is done with unusual sensitivity, **to remodel a house is to redesign it so that the generic features are obliterated and the basic character destroyed in tne name of modernization.** A remodelling job is too often considered a "success" if the original structure is unrecognizable in the result. This technique is appropriately used for buildings which were constructed of inferior materials or for buildings which have fallen into a state of irreversible disrepair due to vacancy or vandalism. Remodeling can also be a proper course of action when a structure undergoes a dramatic change in use, say from a single-family residence to commercial office space.

Unfortunately, it is quite common for a house to be remodelled and totally divested of its valuable characteristics when conditions do not require such radical treatment. Hence, the expression "remodel" has acquired a bad connotation. To many people, it suggests a shameful waste of valuable resources, even though it *is* possible to remodel with sensitivity, especially with the help of a talented architect.

Examples of remodeling jobs can be found in Oak Center where many houses were so devastated by abandonment, theft and a complete lack of maintenance, that the only feasible solution was to "gut" the interior—that is, to remove all remnants of original style. Doors, molding, rosettes, coved ceilings, wainscotting, everything down to the studs in the walls were dismantled and construction started all over again from the eviscerated frame. The new version is typically distinguished by sheetrock walls with a hint of baseboard, aluminum windows, and snazzy light fixtures. Other examples of remodeling can be found in homes where the owners were convinced, sometimes with the help of a contractor or salesman, that, without qualification, "old" is bad and "new" simply wonderful.

In the vast space that separates restoration from remodeling we find rehabilitation. **To rehabilitate a house is to take corrective measures which will make the structure liveable again,** The British use the word "recondition," and lately we've adopted the abbreviation "rehab." **Some aspects of rehab work entail renovation, the introduction of brand new elements.** For example, the electrical circuits may have to be rewired to provide adequate service for today's appliances.

The other face of rehabilitation is preservation, the retention of valuable existing elements. For example, it was a matter of course in 1905 to construct oak floors, inlaid with geometric borders, in the living and dining rooms of Colonial Revival houses. Preserving these floors is intrinsic to proper rehabilitation and would be accomplished in two ways. First, during construction, the hardwood would be covered by a protective dropcloth to avert any additional damage while other carpentry is underway. Later, when the floors are ready for attention, the oak would be sanded and varnished, returning the irreplaceable hardwood to its original richness. In contrast, a remodeling job would treat the valuable oak as if it were ordinary fir, leaving paint cans and lumber on the floor during repairs, and then covering the fascinating textured grain with homogenous shag carpeting when the job is done.

When rehabilitating a house, **it is essential to protect the structural and decorative characteristics which belong to the architectural style. These are the very features which constitute the visual integrity and economic value of the building. Modern elements should only be introduced when absolutely necessary for legal or utilitarian purposes. Modern elements should only be introduced in a manner that is sympathetic to the original design spirit, and never at the expense of irreplaceable assets.** That is what is meant by **REHAB RIGHT.**

Good examples of REHAB RIGHT can be found in homes where family members have done the repairs themselves, lovingly, and where a limited budget prevented the family from purchasing all new hardware. Forced financially to appreciate what they have, these households actually end up with a finished product more valuable for its integrity than any assemblage of replacement parts could ever be.

The rewards of sensitive home improvement are many fold. First, there is the satisfaction of knowing you've done the job right. Second, there is the gratification of compliments from other people who

appreciate that you've done the job right. Third, there is the limitless pleasure of living in an attrac-

chitectural Style of Your Oakland House." There you'll find drawings and descriptions of 13 Oakland

appreciate that you've done the job right. Third, there is the limitless pleasure of living in an attractive and comfortable home. While these benefits are difficult to measure, a fourth reason to REHAB RIGHT can be quantified in dollars and cents. A perceptive combination of restoration and renovation will actually contribute to the resale value of your home. Finally, a good rehab project can be surprisingly influential on an entire block. Improvements in neighborhood quality can also be calculated in monetary terms when it comes to real estate.

HOW TO USE REHAB RIGHT

This handbook is written to tune-up architectural awareness and to convince you that good design makes good economic sense. If you study the book from first paragraph to last you'll know more than enough to make wise rehab decisions. But most readers will have acquired a copy of REHAB RIGHT with a specific residence in mind and they will be anxious to get to the solution of their repair problems without delay. In fact, even in formal discussions about home improvement with architects and contractors, the conversation invariably turns to the professional's own home. Recognizing that each reader will focus on the portion of the manual which affects him or her personally, REHAB RIGHT is organized so the information you and your house need can be quickly selected.

First, **discover your house.** Step outside and take a good look at the building. Walk around it. Touch it. Explore the materials. Do you find clapboard siding or stucco? Wood shingles or asbestos? Single out the details. Are there columns on the porch, pediments on the windows, finials on the roof? Cross the street and look at it from a distance. Appreciate its mass, its overall shape. Is the structure tall, narrow and rectangular or low, spreading and irregular in form? Try to sum up its personality. Is your house noble and ornate? Natural and handcrafted? Or, traditional and trim?

With a refreshed image of your house in mind, come back inside, find a comfortable seat near a reading lamp, and turn to **Chapter 2, "The Architectural Style of Your Oakland House."** There you'll find drawings and descriptions of 13 Oakland residential styles typically in need of rehabilitation. By leafing through the illustrations and reviewing the definitions, you'll likely experience a burst of recognition when you find just the right name for the architectural style of your own home.

The name provides useful clues about the structural and decorative features which merit respect and deserve retention. The name also alerts you to potential repairs because within each of the architectural descriptions you'll find that specific rehab problems are predicted for the different styles.

Chapter 3, "Before You Begin," offers suggestions to consider prior to launching any improvement work at all. How much money should be spent on rehab? When should you hire a professional? What is applicable code? Remember, you'll need City permits for the building projects you undertake. The permit procedure, a discussion of termite reports, and some simple guidelines to make home repairs quake-safe, are included.

Now you're at the heart of REHAB RIGHT. **Chapter 4 "Exteriors" and Chapter 5 "Interiors"** present over one hundred repair problems commonly encountered in the improvement of Oakland homes. (Don't worry, you won't have to face *all* 100 on your house.) For each problem, one or more solutions are described and illustrated, with an indication of the cost. The cause of existing damage is explained. Code restrictions are mentioned where appropriate to remind the reader that in addition to physical and financial constraints there are legal limitations on home improvement too. Consult the **Table of Contents** for the page number of the precise topic that interests you.

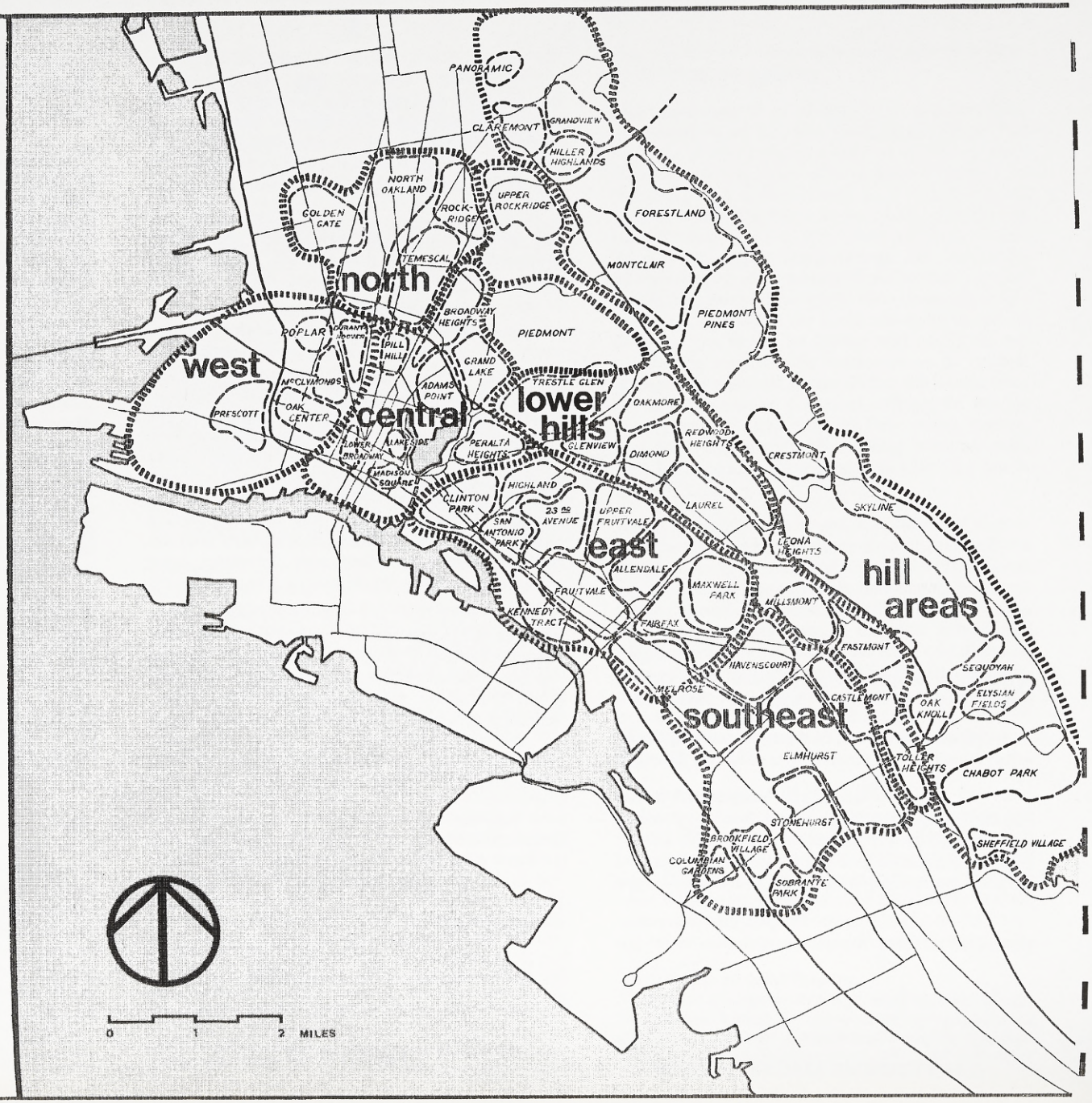
Chapter 6 lists **"Sources and Resources."** If REHAB RIGHT has left you with questions unresolved, this chapter will direct you to people and places who can help.

On the back cover you'll find a built-in ruler, in centimeters and inches both, for taking quick measurements when you are so motivated that you can't take the time to look for a yardstick, and so engrossed in REHAB RIGHT that you just can't put the book down.

REHAB RIGHT GUIDELINES

- **Retain original houseparts and materials wherever possible. As a rule, if damage is present, repair is visually and economically preferable to replacement.**
- **If replacement is necessary, replace parts and materials in-kind.**
- **If replacement in-kind is impossible due to availability or cost, the replacement should at least reproduce the salient visual characteristics of the original, such as material, composition, proportion, and color.**
- **If used, modern house parts should be incorporated with sensitivity to the architectural style.**
- **Wherever possible, replace missing house parts and remove inappropriate modernization.**

Residential Area Names



The forces which bring about architectural style are many: technology, materials at hand, fashion

identify an architectural style. The obvious clues to



Chapter 2.

THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF YOUR OAKLAND HOUSE

THE CONCEPT OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

What's In A Name?

There are so many ways to remember a house. The smell of it, the feel of it, the sound, the cost, the look of it. In addition, every house has a name which communicates the picture in just a few words. The architectural style is a convenient handle which sums up the *form* of the building—like size, shape, room arrangement, interior spaces,—and the *details* within that form—such as ornamentation, hardware, doors, floors, and fireplace. When a building is a style its appearance is not just a random collection of parts. All the features of the building work together to produce a single image. The dimensions of the windows are proportioned to the height and width of the entire house, and the materials selected for siding complement the structural shape. Every choice is a deliberate choice for a consistent overall impression. An individual component may stand out for its craftsmanship or flair, but its most important role is its contribution to the visual integrity of the building as a whole.

The forces which bring about architectural style are many: technology, materials at hand, fashion trends, cultural baggage, family needs, budget, topography, climate, transportation, public utilities, and a host of others. So the name of a style tells us more than what a house looks like. The name can tell us where the house came from, how it was constructed, when it was built, even who lived there. Architectural styles are classified at two levels. The more general category indicates a resemblance due to common origin, like a person's last name does. The more specific category sorts out the distinctive characteristics that define a unique personality, like a person's first name. For example, "Victorian" is the name of an architectural family in which all the kin were built in the late nineteenth century with wood siding and flashy decoration. Within the family, each relative has its own expressive appearance. The Italianate is tall and thin, the Queen Anne, broader with gables, the San Francisco Stick, flat and boxy. If you know enough to call a house "Victorian" that's good, but calling it an "Italianate Victorian" is that much better. The more precise the name of the style, the more explicit the picture, and the more likely you are to REHAB RIGHT.

Architectural Portraits

The architectural portraits in this chapter are in words and drawings both. The verbal descriptions supplement the sketches, so what you can't find in the illustration you might discover in the text. The portraits represent prototype examples of 13 styles. In theory, identification should be fairly simple by comparing your own house with the one pictured. If the details, or the form, or both, jibe, then you are in luck.

In reality, however, your house may possess characteristics that are not shown, or may lack some that are shown. Do not despair. There is great variety within architectural families, and crossbreeding among the separate styles often produces one-of-a-kind hybrids. You might say, for example, "I have a Brown Shingle house with Classical porch columns."

Years of remodeling efforts also make it difficult to identify an architectural style. The obvious clues to a building's rightful name may have been hidden or destroyed by well-intentioned repairmen. If you find yourself in that position, look around the neighborhood for houses with similar patterns to yours, but more original features still intact. The arrangement of windows and doors, for example, and especially the presence of bays and porticos, are useful clues when the columns have rotted, the brackets have been removed, or the clapboard siding has been covered with asbestos shingles. If you can give a name to the house nearby that's an "older" version of your own, like Neoclassic Rowhouse, then you could call yours a "Denatured" Neoclassic Rowhouse.

Other houses are hard to categorize because their plainness borders on the nondescript. Again, look for clues, no matter how subtle, in the volume, the proportion, the construction, the ornament, the age. If you come up with a name, like Prairie School, you could call your house "Simplified" Prairie School.

Some houses are literally camouflaged by the addition of a commercial structure built up to the sidewalk at the front of the first floor. This ruse may keep overhead down, but it doesn't do much good for the architecture. Commercial conversions are typically found on Queen Anne cottages and Neoclassic Rowhouses.

In Oakland, almost every architectural style exists in a large and small version. Both sizes may share the same name, like the mansion-sized Queen Anne and the cottage-sized Queen Anne, or they may assume different names, like the large Brown Shingle, and its smaller counterpart, the Craftsman Bungalow. Design trends were cleverly adapted to variations in family size and budget, without sacrificing quality or aesthetics. There is no reason why the same can't hold true today in the process of rehabilitation. The portraits show the styles as they should look (not necessarily the way they do), so you can use the sketch as a guide for preservation or replacement.

This chapter does not include every Oakland house style, and intentionally so. The gallery illustrates only those styles typically in need of rehab. Several

styles were omitted because they are too rare, too new, or consistently well-maintained. Even if your house is not pictured, the general design principles and repair techniques offered in this book still apply.

The design and technical recommendations are as applicable to multi-family residences as they are to single family units. Unlike modern apartment buildings which could be mistaken for a motel, many older apartment buildings have the appearance of a "house" and warrant sensitive improvement. The suggestions are also useful for rows of commerical structures in the City's older neighborhood centers. Too often these attractive blocks have been awkwardly modernized.

Students of architectural history may take issue with the unqualified praise bestowed on each architectural style. This primer is not meant to be an academic critique. REHAB RIGHT is a tool to improve appreciation of Oakland's architectural heritage, even if some of our local styles are not noteworthy in the context of the international building design. In fact, the City's architect-designed houses are only incidental to the discussion. This is a book about vernacular architecture, the houses in which Oakland people live.

In Chapter 1, under the heading "How To Use REHAB RIGHT" you were encouraged to step outside, take a walk around your house, and become reacquainted with its appearance. If you have not yet done so, try it now. A fresh look at the architectural style you inhabit will make this chapter a lot easier for you to use.

ARCHITECTURAL PORTRAITS OF OAKLAND HOUSE STYLES TYPICALLY IN NEED OF REHAB

Victorian

Say "Victorian" and colorful scenes of pomp and sentiment come to mind, like a richly embellished greeting card of the times. Women in bustles and bows twirl their parasols, strolling down the rose-covered walk in celebration of May Day at Oakland's Arbor Villa. Mustachioed men, their black bowler hats hung on polished brass hooks, mingle at the Forum Bar on Broadway. Slamming their mugs of Wieland Lager on the solid oak counter for emphasis, they extol the exploits of Sheriff Harry Morse who nabbed the notorious Narrato Ponce with the help of his ivory-handled six-guns.

Literally, the word "Victorian" describes an era of 64 years, the exuberant period from 1837 to 1901 when Victoria was Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India. Domestic arts and inventions thrived in her domain, but architecture flourished nowhere better during this period than in California. Here, the contagious optimism of gold rush and silver strike, wheat harvest and cattle round-up, was translated into physical expressions of prosperity. By the 1880's, the life of these aggressive pioneers assumed an aura of grace as the middle-class built themselves homes as spacious and spectacular as purse or parcel would allow. The building facade was embroidered with elaborately carved brackets and spindles, luminescent stained glass, and plaster-cast garlands. Inside, the parlor was filled, even cluttered, with fringed lampshades, draped flags, potted palms, patterned throw rugs, marble busts, and appliqued pillows proclaiming the virtues of religion, motherhood, and "Home Sweet Home." Life was spirited in late nineteenth century California, and the unrestrained taste in ornamentation proclaimed the excitement of the times.

Advances in technology went arm-in-arm with pronouncements of prosperity in prompting such individually expressive residential styles. The introduction of standardized lumber and machine-made nails in 1839 engendered a spectacular new construction technique known as the balloon frame. For generations, house construction required that hefty posts be positioned in the ground, with great difficulty, and that the cross-beams be joined to the posts, with great care, by the painstaking mortise-and-tenon technique. The framework was so sturdy that the building would stand by itself without the help of supporting walls.

In sharp contrast, the revolutionary *balloon frame* utilized lightweight, pre-cut lumber instead of cumbersome timbers, and wire nails in lieu of hand-crafted joinery. Studs, the upright members, extend in one piece from the foundation to the roof, and joists, the horizontal members are nailed to the studs. The frame gets its rigidity from the siding or diagonal sheathing instead of from reinforced joints. The balloon frame, typically used for two-story houses, required only a facility with hammer, saw, and tape measure to construct, so the responsibility for house building was taken from the master carpenter and placed in the hands of ordinary, ambitious handymen. In fact, with the development of a variation on the balloon frame known as the *platform frame*—built one story at a time, with each floor serving as a platform for the next level of construction—it was quite possible for an entire structure to be erected by only two people. Platform frame construction is still used today.

The job was further simplified by the proliferation of house plan books which offered the novice or the merchant builder explicit architectural direction. Periodicals such as the *California Architect and Building News* motivated subscribers with the latest ideas for "tasty" residences, and provided them with floor plans and specifications.

When new machines were invented to mass produce elaborate building ornaments previously hand-hewn, house parts catalogs were distributed by the milling firms to promote and sell their products. By studying the illustrations the way farmers pore over seed catalogs, any builder could express his personal Victorian spirit by designing a unique composition of colonette and cornice, balustrade and bracket, festoon and frieze. (Refer to the illustration of ornamentation vocabulary in Chapter 4.)

While the description of Victorian architecture sounds quite lavish, the fact was that between the balloon frame, the plan books, and the parts catalogs, handsome, well-constructed, and fashionably adorned homes were efficiently erected on a wide-scale for families of practically all income levels.

In Oakland, the flat and ample acreage afforded opportunities for building that the steep, narrow lots in San Francisco could not rival. The climate in the East Bay was far better suited to the Victorians' in-

terest in horticulture, and the abundance of inexpensive land here offered generous lots for the

ITALIANATE

terest in horticulture, and the abundance of inexpensive land here offered generous lots for the practice of gardening. A wealth of native trees shaded the avenues, while experiments with exotic plant material lent a distinctive tropical aspect to the growing Victorian neighborhoods. Visitors to the West would ferry across the bay and hire carriages to view the "elegant mansions and tasteful cottages" they had heard so much about as far away as New York. Even San Franciscans themselves would travel to Oakland to enjoy a sumptuous eleven course meal at the Grand Central Hotel or a bucolic Sunday picnic underneath the coast live oaks.

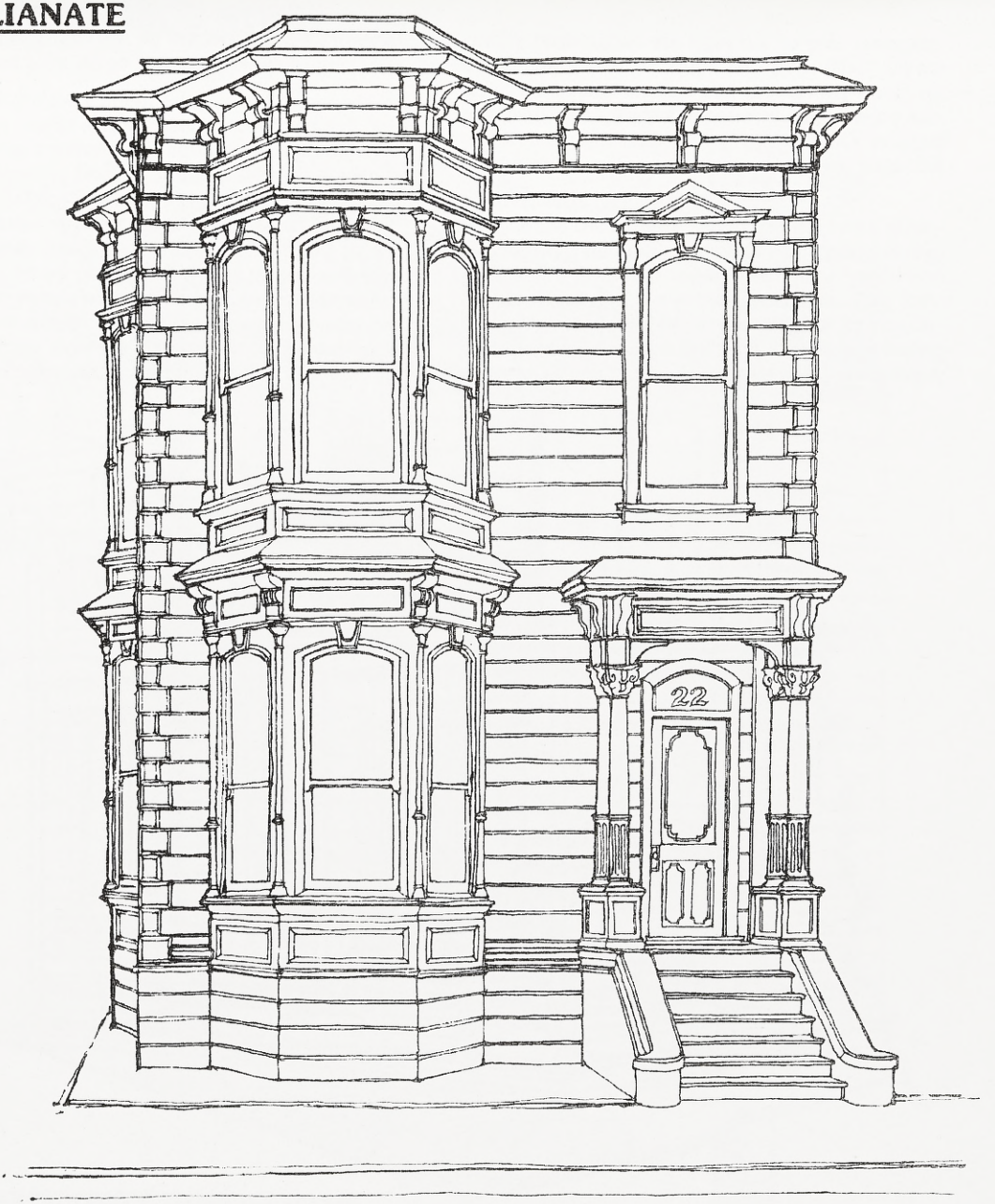
Oakland not only lured new arrivals with a striking physical setting. It offered its inhabitants cultural pursuits as well. In the 1870's, for example, the public library opened under the direction of Ina Coolbrith, California's first poet laureate; the State's first women's club, the scholarly Ebell Society, formed; the Chickering Club convened for amateur poetry readings; Snell's Seminary, one of the city's more select finishing schools, relocated from Benicia; and seven-hundred voices harmonized in a local choral group. How appropriate that Oakland Victorians inhabited house styles befitting their life and times: the expressive architecture of Italianate, Stick, and Queen Anne.

Italianate (mid-1860's-1880's)

Tall and stately, the Italianate house is a dignified neighborhood member in Prescott, Oak Center and Clinton Park, easily identified by its pronounced vertical lines. A two-story, slanted bay takes up about two-thirds of the front, and a raised porch with handsome portico fills the remaining third and visually balances the prominent bay. At the roofline, a projecting cornice is supported by concave, curved brackets, although the roof itself may actually be lower than this "false front" would suggest. In the past, cresting was the crowning touch, but most of this iron lace is long lost to metal salvage for post-Victorian war efforts.

Because the Italianate style is a California adaptation of stone structures built in seventeenth century Italy, certain architectural elements have been translated from stone into native redwood and

ITALIANATE



douglas fir. The square quoins at the corners of an Italianate house are decorative versions of the original masonry reinforcements, and the corinthian columns on the porch are carved from wood, not chipped from marble. Other imitation elements, such as brackets, panels, and keystones, communicate substance and stature critical to the successful appearance of the facade.

The windows on an Italianate house have a three dimensional quality that makes them resemble sculpture more than conventional panes of glass. Long and narrow, the measurements of the window and its many accessories are carefully proportioned to the size of the whole house. The shape, as well as the size, of the window frame, for example, is as graceful as it is distinctive: arched, notched or indented, it is rarely just rectangular. Slender colonettes to either side of the window, a protruding sill beneath, a decorative shield above, and a squeezed pediment, segmented hood or bay cornice to top it all off, turn the window into a spectacular event, not just something to look through.

The front door also reaches out to the street. Beginning with sculpted newel posts at the bottom of the front steps, the extended extrance continues right up the staircase with turned railing balusters to the partially fluted columns on the front porch. Overhead, a portico, which may in turn support another balustrade, shades the front door, itself much more than a flat, plain surface. The solid wood is divided into recessed rectangular panels, and the glass is cut for sparkling highlights.

Inside there is a long hall, with a series of doors. The first leads to the gentlemen's parlor, the second to the ladies' parlor with an additional bay window of its own, the third to the dining room, and the last, at the back of the house, to the kitchen. Within the rooms, arched passageways, reminiscent of the window shapes, provide a more formal transition from one space to the next. Sliding wood panels, solid and incised like the front door, close off the rooms for privacy as well as more efficient heating. Even the white fireplace picks up its decorative theme from the facade, with its mantel supported by curved brackets and its round, arched opening, just like the cornice outside.

SINGLE-STORY ITALIANATE



The ceilings are high, often twelve feet or more. To break up the expanse of wall, wood wainscotting or lincrusta-walton covers the first four feet from the floor. A strip of molding circumscribes the room at, or a foot or so below, the seam where wall and ceiling meet. Wallpaper, typically floral and sometimes garish, extends from wainscot to molding. These techniques make the tall rooms more in scale with the size of people. Some builders installed a coved ceiling instead of a cornice because it was a less costly design feature. The rounded corners give these airy spaces a comfortable sense of enclosure.

When you look up to see just how high that high ceiling is, you discover an elaborate plaster rosette, some three feet in diameter, from which to suspend chandeliers. Originally the ceiling was wallpapered and the rosette was painted a rainbow of colors - the grapes purple, the leaves green, the roses rose. When your neck gets stiff and you look down, you find yourself standing on wall-to-wall carpeting with an Oriental rug on top. The Italianate room envelopes you with things to see.

In Oakland, a smaller version of the Italianate house was also developed. A one-story building with front bay, bracketed cornice, pedimented window, simplified portico and raised first floor, the details are the same as the two story type, but the overall proportions are different. In San Francisco,

the heavy demand for real estate from the gold rush onward forced construction of tall, thin buildings

the heavy demand for real estate from the gold rush onward forced construction of tall, thin buildings which sometimes appear almost unnaturally elongated, but in Oakland the wider lots permitted such luxuries as side yards, side bays, and a local variant: the relatively short and broad Italianate house. Other variations found locally include a two-story Italianate with a one-story bay window, and a flat-front Italianate with no bay window at all.

Since the Italianate buildings date from as early as the 1860's, they have succumbed to many repair problems associated with old age. Prime victims of modernization, these once elegant Italianates are demeaningly concealed under pastel stucco or asbestos siding, mercilessly stripped of their brackets, colonettes and keystones, and thoroughly divested of their original character.

A striking example is found at the corner of 18th Street and Castro, where each in a row of five Italianate houses has a radically different appearance. The first and fourth have been left substantially intact, testimonials to their successive owners. The second has been modernized, or as some people say, "barbarized." Not only have the double-hung windows been ousted by sliding aluminum frames, but the window openings which were too tall for the conventional metal module have been reduced to suitable size by inserting a plywood flap. A once bold front door has been replaced by meek hollow core, and the handsome drop siding has been sheathed in salmon-colored asbestos shingles.

The third house has been mysteriously transformed from an Italianate row house into a Spanish villa. With the whimsy of Walt Disney, some carefree remodeler trowelled the house with white stucco, roofed it with red tile and planted thorny triton cactus right in front. The fifth Victorian house is, alas, just a memory. It was demolished in favor of the drab concrete box built in its place.

San Francisco Stick (late 1870's-1890's)

The San Francisco Stick Style, as its title suggests, originated across the Bay and emphasizes straight lines and right angles. Flat, narrow boards are nailed to the outside of the building to boldly repeat, and blithely reinforce, the structural skeleton

SAN FRANCISCO STICK



beneath the clapboard skin. Diagonal braces, installed parallel to the facade instead of projecting from it, frame the porch. The roof projects over the front of the house so that the gable end forms a separate plane. Its composition of right triangles, incised with sunrays and starbursts, casts a shadow on the facade behind.

The structure of the San Francisco Stick house communicates lines and right angles in a more subtle way than the ornamentation does. A rectangular bay window, which also happened to be easier to construct, replaced the slanted bay window of its Italianate predecessor. The straight roofline of the earlier style was bent into a gable that creates the illusion that the sides are perpendicular. The horizontal siding is reoriented to vertical and diagonal positions, especially around the bay window where the structure is exaggerated by the board and batten technique. Furthermore, the square tower first appears.

At last, by the late 1870's, builders were treating wood as wood. For a decade before they had used wood as a medium to imitate stone in the adornment of Italianate houses. The two-dimensional design of the Stick decoration was a product of scrollsaw and jigsaw—the same tools which introduced those intricately carved puzzles for Victorians' entertainment. Local redwood and Douglas fir offered seemingly inexhaustible supplies of high quality timber with clear open grain that did not split or splinter when nailed. Surprisingly, the price of redwood remained relatively constant through the turn of the century, despite the increase in demand, a brief period of inflation, and a duty on foreign trade which could have easily encouraged a competitive rise in domestic lumber rates.

A decorative variation to the San Francisco Stick style, known as "Eastlake," carried the exploration of the properties of wood one step further to the three-dimensional. Knobs and newels, turned out by chisel, lathe and gouge, and most closely resembling table legs, typify this architectural mode mistakenly named for British designer Charles Eastlake.

Seven years after the publication of Eastlake's book *Hints on Household Taste,* a treatise eschewing excessive decors in favor of more "chaste and sober designs," the Londoner's work was displayed at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. His furniture was straight and square, its flat surfaces impeccably pierced with abstract floral or geometric patterns. Builders and architects, quick to catch on to the latest fashion, applied Eastlake's cutouts directly to Stick houses. But soon the ornamentation assumed a life of its own, and the simple, chaste designs evolved into sculptured, almost voluptuous, decorations. Flowers and foliage, columns and spindles, as shapely as the contemporary hourglass corset, came to be known as the "Eastlake Style." Needless to say, the sombre Briton was appalled at the application of his name to such chicanery. "The specimens I have seen illustrated," he wrote regarding the architectural version of his once simplified standards, "burlesque such doctrines of art as I have ventured to maintain."

When explosive Eastlake motifs are found combined with the straightforward San Francisco Stick Style, the result is often referred to as Stick-Eastlake. However, extensive research by Judith Waldhorn and Gary Kray reveal that there is very little to differentiate the actual building design of houses with stick and/or Eastlake adornment. Even though some of the exterior ornamentation may be repeated inside—diagonal braces or spindles on archways, for example—the plan itself is usually reminiscent of its Italianate precursor, and provides inconclusive evidence for a separate Eastlake or Stick-Eastlake category.

President Herbert Hoover lived in a modest, two-story Stick house with fancy shingles and a spindled arch on Twelfth Street, near Chestnut, when he was an office boy here in 1896. That house probably cost $2500 to construct. Julia Morgan, the prolific architect whose own work will be mentioned in later sections on the Craftsman Tradition and Period Revival, grew up in a more lavish Stick home at the corner of Brush and 14th Street, a residence which showed elements of Queen Anne architecture as well. Perhaps the best Oakland example of the San Francisco Stick style is the Alfred Cohen house on the east side of 29th Avenue just above East 14th Street. Obscured by overgrown trees, it is easy to overlook. Stick houses are also found in West Oakland where Ninth Street and Chester intersect, on 15th Street, east of a Grove Street warehouse, nestled between modern apartment buildings on the ridge above Grand Avenue, and quite by coincidence, East-of-the-Lake.

As the eighties approached, the urge to combine architectural styles was encouraged. Stick and Eastlake features were enthusiastically incorporated in the Queen Anne style which soon followed.

Queen Anne (1883-1890's)

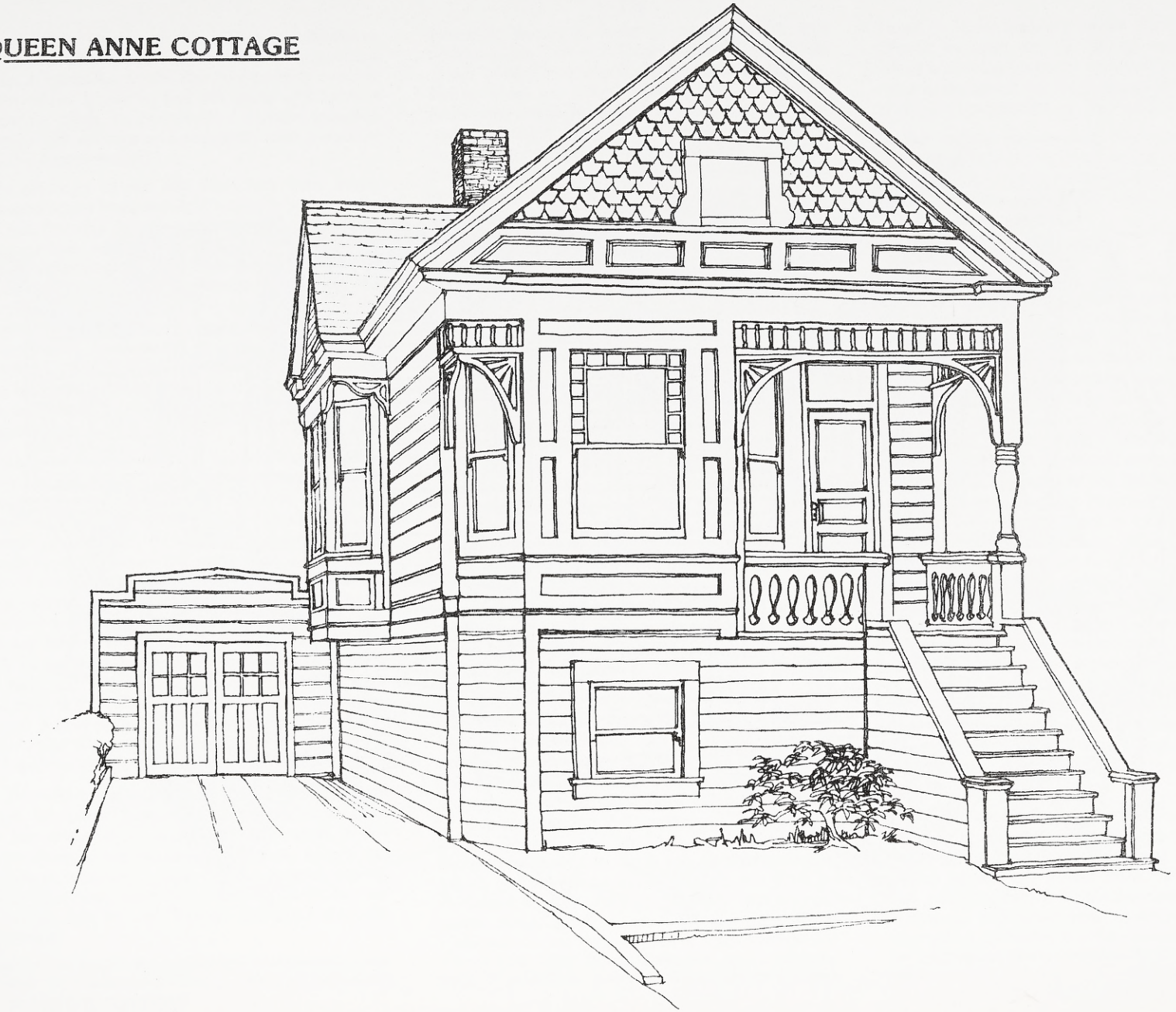
When an 1883 issue of *California Architect and Building News* introduced what came to be known as the Queen Anne style to the Bay Area, it marked a dramatic departure from the rigorously vertical Italianate and San Francisco Stick style houses. The Queen Anne house is certainly more horizontal in appearance, but more important, it is an absolute concoction of volumes and textures. Round corner towers with peaked witch's caps intersect steeply pitched gables with appliqued sunbursts. Recessed upstairs balconies with turned balustrades overlook prominent front porches trimmed with arched lattice-work. The arrangement of forms appears haphazard, and the assortment of surfaces is totally unrestrained. Horizontal bands of masonry, scallopped shingles, colorful tiles—or stucco made to look like tiles, carved wood work, plaster garlands, and "artist's glass" mark an irregular progression of stories from foundation to oriel to attic. There is no single roofline, but a picturesque composition of merging shapes. Nor is there a single window pane: the upper portion of each double-hung window is surrounded by small squares of flashed glass. And if there still wasn't enough color, two pieces of glass would be installed together to create the hue of a third.

If the Italianate house is like a svelte, prim dandy standing at attention, his frilled cravat spilling over velvet lapels, then the Queen Anne house is like a buxom gypsy, her ruffled skirts, billowing blouse and patterned kerchiefs infinitely artful, but always in disarray and never quite matching. Despite the discrepancy between the two images, both styles are expressive, even extroverted, in true Victorian spirit.

QUEEN ANNE



QUEEN ANNE COTTAGE



The striking change in image was eased by central heating, admittedly more important in the East

the East Bay to the rest of the country in 1869. The demands of a growing population for new housing

vestibule, but there is still no corridor. The rooms

The striking change in image was eased by central heating, admittedly more important in the East. There, by the late 1870's, it was no longer necessary for rooms to be shut off to keep the heat in and the cold out, so the circulation pattern was not constrained to long corridors with an endless series of doors. The influence spread westward, and here too the Queen Anne has a grand hall at the heart of the house—a symbol of gracious living—and the rooms radiate out from the central core. Rejecting the strict lines of the Italianate and San Francisco Stick floor plan, the interior spaces in the Queen Anne house flow from one to another, with dimensions as irregular as the exterior silhouette suggests. Sometimes a freestanding staircase rises like an island in a two-story high living room; sometimes an inglenook provides a cozy recess next to the fireplace with a comfortable bench for reading and rest.

Derived from the rambling manor houses of British architect Norman Shaw, the Queen Anne style was popularized under the banner of "picturesque." Style books, like *Palliser's*, magazines like *Harper's*, and essays, like those of Andrew Jackson Downing, promoted the picturesque mode as the pinnacle of good taste. It was most desirable, even democratic, to design a building whose informal arrangement of forms and textures communicated a "wild ruggedness." Asymmetric patterns, emphasizing shape, light and color, were the calling cards of domestic design.

In the San Antonio District, a rhythmic progression of tower houses marches up 23rd and 24th Avenues, from E. 21st to E. 27th Street. Some of the towers are enormous cylinders, almost like silos. Some are prism-shaped turrets perched high on the corner, making the house resemble a mid-eastern spicebox. Other towers are simply rectangular in shape. A neighborhood collection of tower houses like this is exceptional, an architectural resource that few cities other than Oakland can point to.

In the 1880's, a rowhouse version of the Queen Anne style popped up in cities nationwide from Boston to San Francisco, adapting the popularity of the picturesque to a broader range of budgets. In Oakland, it had been over ten years since the completion of the transcontinental railroad married the East Bay to the rest of the country in 1869. The demands of a growing population for new housing were accommodated by a proliferation of Queen Anne cottages. You'll find their giant gingerbread gables city wide: in North Oakland, west of Telegraph Avenue, in West Oakland near McClymond's High, in San Antonio near Foothill Boulevard, and in Chinatown around Madison Square.

The Queen Anne Cottage is a one-story building practically consumed by an oversized gable. A veritable billboard for textural effect, the ornate gable may be clothed in decorative shingles, framed with intricate bargeboard, pierced by flashed glass windows, stamped with a sunburst, and topped with a proud finial. A less elaborate gable might only have scallopped shingles, a perimeter of dentils, and a modest topknot. The Queen Anne Cottage is very common in Oakland, and can be seen in a row on Harrison at 29th Street, as an antique store on College near Clifton, and sprinkled along 97th and 98th Avenues between Bancroft and East 14th Street, and scattered throughout San Antonio and Clinton Park.

The gable overwhelms the front bay window, and this arrangement of volumes creates cut-away corners and a recessed porch. For each of these new architectonic features, special ornamentation evolved. At the corner, spindled brackets support the overhang, and a pendant— a turned, wooden tear drop, the opposite of a finial—punctuates the projection. The porch has a circular arch (Queen Annes show a fondness for circular forms) which reaches from the bay window to rest on a single column. The column represents no single motif, but, like the Queen Anne itself, is a mixture of styles, as its beaded base, truncated shaft and ad-hoc capital indicate. In fact, the Queen Anne style is such an unabashed composite of borrowed elements that it behooves the owner to read the other sections in this manual on Victorian types as well.

The floor plan of the Queen Anne Cottage is not as palatial as the countrified Queen Anne style. The limitations of rectangular urban lots and workingmen's budgets combined to condense the sprawl of gables and turrets into a more succinct package. The grand central living hall is reduced to a modest vestibule, but there is still no corridor. The rooms are arranged in succession like Italianate or Stick, but the spaces merge together through spindled archways.

In some cases, Queen Anne Cottages were built by speculators who advertised them as a wise investment because the one-story structure had a built-in option for expansion: the attic under the gable. In other, more select situations, architects designed Queen Annes. Examples of the collaborative work of the brothers Newsom, prominent California architects of the time, still stand in "Brooklyn," that section of Oakland incorporated in 1872 and now known as Clinton Park. Look for one on the southeast corner of East 18th Street and 10th Avenue, and another on the southeast corner of East 23rd Street and 9th Avenue. In 1890, the same year that his plan book was published with instructions for a "suburban style suitable to Oakland," Samuel Newsom cheerfully announced: "Nowadays, beauty . . . is becoming happily less and less of a luxury.'

Colonial Revival

As the 19th century drew to a close, and the gaiety of the nineties subsided, the nation's homebuilders, almost penitent for their Victorian excesses, looked toward an architectural style more refined than the bombastic Italianate and more orderly than the quaint Queen Anne. Things European lost their snobbish allure as the new world filled with working class immigrants, and Americans turned to their own country's history in search of an architectural image.

The New England exhibit at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition sparked the nostalgia. Then, with improved train service, people began to travel for pleasure, discovering in Massachusetts and Rhode Island the charm of colonial houses "mellowed in place as nothing else in America seemed to be." The colonists' homes were rich in elements derived from the Greek and Roman humanistic tradition: symmetrical facades, floor plans, and sensitive proportion. Known as "Georgian," "Federal" or "Adam," and "Jeffersonian," the various styles built between the Revolution and 1820 were typified by their classic columns, prominent porticoes,

molded geometric patterns in low relief, rectangular windows with small panes of glass, and a semi-elliptical fanlight over the front door. These features were easy enough to imitate with the materials and technology available a century later. The Colonial Revival was on.

The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago clinched the neoclassic trend. Beaux-Arts architecture, named for the Parisian design school which professed Greek and Roman precedents, was the theme of the world's fair. For years thereafter, everything from public monuments to office buildings to single-family residences picked up the classic features—capitals, pediments, colonnades, etc.—that bespoke a civilized culture.

Meanwhile, back in Oakland, major streets were suddenly striped with parallel metal tracks, and the air literally buzzed. The electric trolley had arrived. Along Grove Street in 1889, along Piedmont and East 14th Street in 1892, along Telegraph, San Pablo, Broadway, Foothill, and numerous others in subsequent years, the electric trolley brought the blessing of efficient transportation to the City, and with it, a halo of development. Business enterprises lined the trolley route, genesis of the commercial strips which cling to those thoroughfares to this day.

On the side streets, in a grid pattern perpendicular to the electric cable, Colonial Revival houses sprung up, like mushrooms which feed on a tree's roots, boldly tracing the roots' clandestine pattern above ground. In return, the mushrooms provide nutrients to the host tree, and similarly, the trolley's existence depended on ample patronage from the very development it created.

The wealthy built Colonial homes of grandiose proportions. In the East Oakland foothills, the Dunsmuir House stands as an impressive example of neoclassic architecture. Its white doric columns, majestic pediment, and parade of roof balustrades have such an air of mystery and romance that this landmark has been used as a movie set, most recently for the film *Burnt Offerings*.

Another large Colonial Revival building can be found at 7th Avenue and East 18th Street. It has a substantial pediment supported by two-story high Ionic columns, sidelights flanking the front door,

CLASSIC BOX



and a protective brick wall with cannonball topknot defining the yard. But its modern use is much less exclusive than that of the Dunsmuir mansion: this is a boarding house.

For the average family, the separation of work place and residence was at last a convenient reality, so several simplified versions of the Colonial Revival were designed to suit their needs. The subdivision of residential land near the trolley lines was noted for its narrow street frontage which coincidentally minimized the distance from front stoop to car stop. What the lot lost in width it made up for in depth, and a long shoe-box shaped building was the architectural response. Architectural historian Sally Woodbridge has dubbed this style the Classic Box. For lack of a more formal designation, we call the other workingclass styles the Neoclassic Rowhouse and Eastern Shingle Cottage. These houses exhibit neoclassic details, although their form maintains obvious hold-overs from the Queen Anne Cottage, like the raised basement, recessed porch, and bay window.

The Colonial Revival style was more popular in the East Bay than in San Francisco, but in general was short-lived in California. It just didn't fit in. Charles Keeler, in his 1904 book *The Simple Home*, harangued "the meaningless white-painted fluted columns of hollow wood" as "wholly incongruous in the glare, newness and rush of western life." In response, Californians directed their attention to the State's heritage in search of a style more attuned to the local light and landscape. The California counterpart to Colonial Revival became the Mission Revival, although few, if any, residential examples exist in Oakland.

Despite its brevity, the few years of popularity enjoyed by the Colonial Revival style coincided with a large demand for housing. The Oakland population tripled from 48,682 in 1890 to 150,174 in 1910. Urbanization reached out along the fingers of the electric trolley lines, reorganized and greatly expanded in 1902 as the Key System under the strong hand of F.M. "Borax" Smith. And the City boasted the lowest death rate in the entire world! Less than thirteen mortalities per thousand inhabitants for the twelve year period between 1886 and 1898. Thus, the large number of Classic Boxes and Cottages found in Oakland belies the limited period Colonial Revival was fashionable in California.

Neoclassic Rowhouses are quite common in North Oakland. The trolley, after all, spread its influence up Grove Street, Telegraph, Claremont, and Shattuck. You'll recognize examples of this style along Temescal Creek, near Bushrod Recreation Center, and by Mosswood Park. The rowhouses are sited close to the sidewalk on fairly narrow sidestreets, like Locksley and 58th Street. There is but a patch of front yard wedged between the prominent front steps, the sidelong driveway, and the paved-in planter strip. Obviously the very urban Colonial Revival style was not known for its integration with nature. In fact, this was the last hurrah for formality because the earthy First Bay Tradition followed soon thereafter. The Eastern Shingle Cottage provided the transition.

Classic Box (1890-1910)

It's not a very appealing name, Classic Box, but it certainly is descriptive. A two-story structure, resembling a Kinney shoebox in shape and a roman temple in detail, this style is typical to West Coast cities which experienced a burst of population growth at the turn of the century—Seattle, Portland and Oakland. Don't think of the "box" as an unimaginative geometric shape. Consider it, instead, a creative response to site constraints and fashionable trends. The Classic Box pulled in its wings in contrast to the spread eagle posture of the Queen Anne. The parts of the house were retracted into an orderly package, with flush planes, flattened ornamentation, and few protruding parts. Even bay windows, when they exist on the side or front, are compressed, a broad angle minimizing the distance of the projection.

At the same time, the rectangular layout recalled the floor plan of the colonists' homes they had set out to imitate. The earliest settlers in the 17th century had designed the first American dwellings no more than one room deep under the main roof. The more sophisticated Colonial style which soon followed, and persisted as the most common style in the 18th century, was just as wide, but twice as deep. Called "double-pile," this floor plan consisted of two rows of rooms, broadside facing front. Reinterpreted a hundred years later in Oakland, the long, narrow lots demanded that the double-pile plan be reoriented, with the short end addressing the street instead.

Typically, the front door is on one side, leading to a foyer devoted to a "U" or "L" shaped staircase sporting two knobbed railing balusters per step. The stairway landing, bathed in pastel light from the stained glass overhead, boasts a built-in bench whose hinged top reveals a hidden storage bin. Behind the foyer there's a closet, then a bathroom, and at the back, the kitchen. On the flip side of the double-pile plan, the living room, dining room and wash porch are lined up.

Colonial Revival details include hefty ceiling beams, waist-high wainscotting, and classic columns in the archways—all in a dark finish. This was the period when hardwood floors came into their own, and the regularity of the floor plan was emphasized by the parquet border inlaid around the perimeter of square rooms. A plan book published by the Pacific States Savings, Loan and Building Company around 1900 offered an elegant but economical ten-room house that we would call a Classic Box. Its construction cost? Only $10,000.

The Classic Box is capped by a broad peak. A dormer window sticks its head out from the middle—a hipped roof within a hipped roof. At the cornice, the eaves are usually enclosed, either a shallow relief of plaster patera or swag garlands on the frieze. Patera are abstracted petals in concentric circles. Swag garlands are carved compositions of fruit and flowers, draped like a piece of cloth over two supports, and "tied" with plaster ribbons. Also known as festoons, the garlands sometimes appear in a band between the first and second story. While this decoration recalls Victorian ornament, other variants of the Classic Box anticipate the Craftsman era. On these later versions, the eaves are no longer enclosed, and the exposed rafters constitute decoration derived directly from structure.

There is great variety among window shapes on a single Classic Box. The dormer window is short and broad, like a winking eye. The double-hung windows on the facade have a squarish appearance, and on some, the upper portion is partitioned into

CLASSIC BOX



eight smaller panes, akin to its colonial ancestors. The window arrangement is fairly symmetrical in front, but on the side, windows of assorted size are scattered chaotically across a large page lined by slender, clapboard siding. Some of these windows are as small as twelve inches by eighteen inches; some are stained glass; some have diamond-shaped leaded partitions and do not even pretend to open. Despite the discrepancies, every window in a Neoclassic Box is invariably framed by a wide strip of flat, wood trim.

Colonial Revival houses are known for Palladian windows, and these appear on selected Neoclassic Boxes in Oakland. A Palladian window has three parts: a high arched central section, and, on either side, a lower section underneath an entablature. This distinguished feature is named after its designer Andrea Palladio, Venetian architect of the Italian Renaissance. In the 17th century he revived the use of classical forms and proportion, and his work has been imitated ever since. Look for a Palladian window on the Claremont Avenue apartment building next to Hardy Park and the professional offices that overlook Lake Merritt near Perkins Street.

Other classic details of this residential style may have Palladian origins too. Hugging the corners of the house are fluted pilasters. Pilasters are like columns, having a base, shaft and capital, but pilasters are flat instead of round or square. The front door is enshrined beneath a portico complete with Ionic or Corinthian capitals. When the portico is flat, it is topped by a turned balustrade, and sometimes the portico extends across the house, creating a spacious front porch. In other homes, the portico is peaked and hipped, repeating the theme established by the roof and dormer. Even the front steps are in keeping. The tread and risers are flanked by a terraced stoop, each level covered by a flat, overhanging cap.

Originally, Colonial Revival houses were painted white or subdued tones of gray, with white trim and black window sash. Some modern owners, jumping on the Victorian paint wagon, have chosen to highlight details with bright, contrasting colors. As successful as this technique is for extroverted Italianate and San Francisco Stick houses, it is of ques-

tionable value for the more sedate neoclassic style.

austere bay window on the Neoclassic Rowhouse,

from the ground, it can present a large climb to the

tionable value for the more sedate neoclassic style. Another dilemma faced by contemporary occupants is the lack of off-street parking. Classic boxes were designed to fill their narrow lots, and besides, they were built for riders of mass transit.

Neoclassic Rowhouse (1895-1915)

Not every family needed a ten room home. A smaller East Bay residential style which grew out of the Colonial Revival genre is the Neoclassic Rowhouse. A one-story house on a raised foundation, with a hipped roof and dormer window, the Rowhouse shares many classic details with its brother the Box. Its form, however, is more reminiscent of its forebear, the Queen Anne Cottage. Although "rowhouse" suggests attached units, it is used here to mean detached houses built side-by-side, in a line.

The front portico that is so pronounced on the Neoclassic Box is absorbed within the rectangular perimeter of the Rowhouse. The front door is recessed to one side. On the same corner, the large peaked roof reaches out over the door, and rests on one, two or three classical columns. The columns are abbreviated, resting as they do on a three-foot high wall which encloses the porch and accentuates the squared-off plan. The character of the columns varies from house to house. They can be square and chunky with Doric features, or turned and slender with simplified Ionic capitals. On remodeled Neoclassic Rowhouses, the columns are often camouflaged in asbestos siding, or replaced by curlicued wrought-iron supports. In some cases, the porch and its columns have been eliminated altogether, walled-in and weatherized to create more interior living space.

Alley-like sideyards are the result of narrow lots. Designers of the Neoclassic Rowhouse were forced to capitalize on the front and the back of the house for natural light. On the street front the living room had a slanted or square bay with double-hung windows; in the rear, there is an airy sleeping-porch. Where space allowed, a modest bay projects into the side yard, the way an elbow sticks out when your hands are in your pockets, no matter how close you hold your arm to your body. Notice the difference in proportion between the broad and austere bay window on the Neoclassic Rowhouse, and the elaborate and elongated bay window on the Italianate.

The dormer window plays an important part in visually breaking up the roof and venting the structure, but it does nothing to supplement the supply of light. Behind the dormer is an attic space rarely converted to living quarters. It is not surprising, then, that when the glass in the dormer breaks it is replaced with plywood or odd-lot lumber.

Like the Box, narrow white clapboard covers the Rowhouse, wide, flat trim frames its assorted windows, and a terraced stoop flanks the front steps. Since the main floor is raised as much as ten feet from the ground, it can present a long climb to the front door. For safety purposes, most steps have supplemental railings that were not a part of the original building. A railing design sensitive to the colonial motif is graduated like the steps themselves. The more common, hardware store solution is a straight wrought-iron rail installed on the diagonal, but its appearance is jarring.

The raised main floor creates opportunities for in-law apartments, rental units and garages underneath. Tempting as this extra space is, efforts to utilize it are often accompanied by violations of building or planning codes. Similarly, the handyman, beckoned by the dormer window to expand

NEOCLASSIC ROWHOUSE



into the attic, faces legal constraints pertinent to family safety. Before invading the attic or basement of your Neoclassic Rowhouse with an army of tools and good ideas, check with the Inspectional Services and Housing Conservation Departments. (Their services are described in more detail in Chapter 3.)

Eastern Shingle Cottage (1895-1910)

The Eastern Shingle Cottage is so named because its A-frame shape and shingle surface are holdovers from a larger, east coast style. Its details, however, are strictly classic, and firmly in the Colonial Revival tradition. In fact, close examination shows that the ground floor of the Eastern Shingle Cottage is almost identical to the Neoclassic Rowhouse: a raised first story, a recessed front porch with classic columns, and a bay window to one side. But the second level is astonishingly different. A gigantic gable twice as tall at its apex as the height of the first floor, and as wide as the house itself, dominates the scene.

The front and sides of the gigantic gable meet at a perfect seam. If this were more of a Craftsman house, the eaves would extend beyond the face of the gable, and the supporting beams would be exposed. The concealed structure and flush edges are among the reasons the Cottage belongs in the Colonial Revival category instead of the Brown Shingle Style, despite its frequently brown shingled surface.

The gable is pierced by one or two windows, which are surrounded by broad, flat trim. This is similar in spirit to the attic window which interrupts the hipped roof of the Neoclassic Box because emphasis on the window compensates for the ungainly expanse of the roof plane. Several design techniques are used to accomplish this. On many examples, the double-hung window is underlined by a wood railing with closely spaced balusters. The function of the window and railing composition is to complement the proportion of the enormous isosceles triangle in which it sits. Unfortunately these railings are often removed when new siding is installed. The window has no visual anchor without it, and the gable looks miserably empty.

EASTERN SHINGLE COTTAGE



On other examples, the window sill is exaggerated and supported by protruding brackets, something like a pouting lower lip. On still others, the window panel is recessed within the gable, and the shingles curve inward to meet the sash.

On the side of the house, which is to say on the side of the gigantic gable roof, there is a large dormer-like projection with several double-hung windows. A dormer is a window placed vertically in a sloping roof, with another sloping roof of its own. The name derives from the French word "dormer" (they pronounce it door-may) which means "to sleep" because the space the dormer window affords usually serves as sleeping quarters. Sure enough, in the Eastern Shingle cottage this feature is the upstairs bedroom.

Architect Ernest Coxhead, an English expatriate, practiced in the Bay Area during the Colonial Revival period. His rather eccentric designs for churches and residences are characterized by an over-sized gable for the roof, sheathed with shingles and punctured by carefully placed windows. His influence on the merchant builders who distributed the Eastern Shingle Cottage throughout Oakland and Berkeley is obvious.

est expression of the Brown Shingle home. The California Bungalow is like a compact

Coxhead's was wry. Of them all, Maybeck best em-

First Bay Tradition

There's a saying that "history repeats itself" and when it comes to architecture this conventional wisdom really applies. For "revival" styles, the home builders of a particular era look to historic forms for inspiration and imitation. In "germinal" or original styles, a new building aesthetic is established which will someday be copied by future designers.

The First Bay Tradition, as the name suggests, was the beginning of a regional style which was destined to reappear. It emerged in the 1890's, developed for the next 25 years or so, and peaked in the mid-1920's when over 14,000 bungalows were erected in East Oakland. The Second Bay Tradition began in the thirties, and for its duration urban residences resembled rural California farmhouses. As development moved upward into the hills, post and beam construction was reinterpreted to accommodate the steep slopes and incorporate the panoramic views. By the Third Bay Tradition in the sixties, the redwood sheathed vertical box was in vogue, with vocabulary borrowed from the tract builder's language.

The First Bay Tradition is characterized by its communion with nature, sensitivity to basic materials, appreciation of structural form, and demand for fine craftsmanship. Sound familiar? These very tenets are repeated one more time in the Back-To-Earth Movement of the seventies. Because more Oakland houses fit into the First Bay Tradition than any other category, our city has the unequalled resource of an older architecture that is "in" by contemporary standards.

The redwood, the exposed beams, the built-in bookcases, the informal floor plan, have tremendous appeal to a new generation of homebuyers seeking natural quality for their living environment and financial investment.

Four architectural styles constitute the First Bay Tradition, and they fit in two subcategories: Craftsman and Prairie. As we found with other Oakland styles, there seems to be a small and large version of each. The Craftsman Bungalow is a more modest expression of the Brown Shingle home. The California Bungalow is like a compact counterpart of the winged Prairie Style.

While house trends in the Victorian era were established by merchant builders, the First Bay Tradition derived from the work of professional architects. Although only a rare reader will own a house designed by one of the great masters, their influence is seen in so much of Oakland's architecture that they deserve mention here.

In 1869, Joseph Worcester, Swedenborgian minister, left Boston for San Francisco, and brought to the Bay Area the transcendental teaching of Ruskin, Emerson and Thoreau. "The most beautiful styles of art and architecture," they wrote, "are those that closely imitate the forms of nature." As a physical statement of this design philosophy, Worcester built himself a house in what was then an unfashionable section of Piedmont, a rough-hewn cottage constructed entirely of unfinished redwood, inside and out. Imagine what a striking departure this reserved and rustic bungalow was from the highly ornamented and ostentatious Victorian homes of the same period (1876).

By the 1890's, the Bay Area enjoyed a poulation of well-educated architects. Each picked up the thread of Worcester's plea for the unaffected and wove it into a new architectural fabric. A. Page Brown, A.C. Schweinfurt, Willis Polk, Bruce Porter and Bernard Maybeck collaborated on the design of Worcester's house of worship. The Church of New Jerusalem (2107 Lyon Street, San Francisco) is a masterpiece of serenity, and a milestone in the First Bay Tradition for its consistent use of handcrafted natural materials.

The influence of Worcester on the work of Ernest Coxhead, John Galen Howard, Louis Mullgardt, and Julia Morgan was less direct, but the outcome was similar: an architecture of shingles, stained wood, exposed rafters and picturesque spatial arrangement.

Despite similarities, there was no formula. Each architect pursued a personal building style. Polk's work was flamboyant, Schweinfurt's was primitive, Coxhead's was wry. Of them all, Maybeck best embodied the Arts and Crafts attitude because he participated in the construction process when the blueprints left the drawing board. Woodworker, stonecarver, post-painter, Maybeck has become something of a folk hero in the Bay Area for his unrelenting commitment to fine craftsmanship. The many examples of his residential work which can still be discovered in the middle and upper class neighborhoods of Berkeley and Oakland offer a rallying point for architectural groupies.

The famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright was a contemporary of the First Bay Tradition design circle, and despite the two-thousand mile distance from Wright's home base in the midwest, his influence was felt here in Oakland in three ways. First and foremost, Wright "invented" the Prairie Style house. According to *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California,* "With the exception of Chicago, there is no urban community which contains as many examples of the Prairie Style (as the Oakland-San Francisco metropolis)."

Secondly, Wright trained several architects, among them A.C. Schweinfurt, Frederick Langhorst, and Aaron Green, who later came to California to achieve prominence and contribute to the evolution of the local genre. Third, Wright was imitated by Bay Area practitioners in all three phases of the regional tradition. The gently sloping roofs, low proportions, sheltering overhangs, and indigenous materials which typify Wright's style were incorporated in the work of architects John Hudson Thomas in the teens, William Wurster in the thirties, Lois Langhorst in the forties, Charles Callister and Jack Hillmer in the fifties, developer Joseph Eichler in the sixties, and countless other Bay Area building designers throughout the twentieth century.

The preceding paragraphs may read like a telephone book, there are so many names mentioned. But the point is a simple one. The architecture of the First Bay Tradition in Oakland displays an unusual design awareness for homes built by contractors, and this can be attributed to the Tradition's origins in the work of talented, professional architects.

BROWN SHINGLE



Brown Shingle (late 1890's-1915)

The tie beams, for example, are not concealed

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Brown Shingle (late 1890's-1915)

The spacious, two-story Craftsman house is called either Brown Shingle or Western Stick Style. These interchangeable names are as straightforward as the style itself. They are no-frill descriptions of the building's trademarks: the redwood shingles, weathered to a raisin-brown, and the projecting structural members, elongated and exaggerated sticks. This frankness was hardly the case in the Victorian era when the houses were so decked-out that they earned pretentious names derived from European dignitaries.

A Craftsman house was once cleverly described as "looking more natural than nature itself." The characteristics of the Brown Shingle style justify this quip. The shingles cover the entire house like bark on the trunk of a tree. They bend where the building bends and bulge where the building bulges. On a beautiful example in Pill Hill (384 34th Street), the shingles form a hood over the window, circling it the way that cambium encases the bole when a bough is removed.

The shingles are typically two feet long and eight inches wide, paper thin at the leading edge and nearly half an inch thick at the base. Because they overlap to keep out the rain, the shingles look more like horizontal rectangles than vertical ones, once installed. Many Brown Shingle houses are shingled in a manner which looks as if each slat is a double image. In reality, the broad and narrow bands are all the same size shingle, but the spacing varies to create the pattern.

Shingles change color with age and acquire a rich patina that is desirable, even sought after, but in some cases they do look shabby. To freshen up shingles, use stain, never paint. Paint harms natural shingles because it clogs the pores. Water collects with no way to evaporate, and accelerates decay.

The word "stick" was used in the 1880's to describe the flat boards applied to the facade of Victorian houses to echo the structure underneath. Here, too, the stick work is a structural expression. While the Victorian stick style capitalized on the ornamental opportunity the stick work afforded, the Craftsman stick style emphasizes the structure itself. The tie beams, for example, are not concealed within the roof, but extend beyond the eaves into plain view. The protruding end of the beam is finished with a simple diagonal cut, a set of notches, or a Swiss or Japanese motif. Braces are attached to the gabled end of the house to support the heavy rafters. Constructed like a right-triangle, each brace is finished with a slash, a notch, an Alpine cut-out, or an Oriental twist, like the beam itself. Between the braces and the broadly pitched roofline, a bargeboard is added, a sturdy two-by-twelve, from the days when lumber dimensions were literal, and "two inches" did not mean "one-and-five-eights."

Living and sleeping porches are an essential feature of the Brown Shingle style not only because they obscure the threshold between indoors and out, as the Craftsman credo commanded, but also because they provide another stage for stickwork. Porch posts often stand in pairs—two sticks are better than one—and the horizontal framing members project a foot or more beyond the posts. Many a veranda is covered by a trellis, and what is a trellis but the barest skeleton of structural form? Even the choice of wisteria as the vine which is typically trained over the trellis cooperates with the overall image. In warm seasons, wisteria may camouflage the trellis with its profuse foliage or upstage the stickwork with pendants of lavender blossoms, but as winter approaches the vines lose their leaves, and the structure prevails.

The incorporation of plants into the architectural form is but one way Craftsman style houses use natural materials exclusively. Shingles and shake, rough stone and redwood were acceptable, trimmings were unnecessary, and oil paint generally frowned upon. According to the Hillside Club, early East Bay conservationists and arbiters of taste, "No colors are so soft, varied and harmonious as those of wood." Despite this, or perhaps rising to the challenge, Bernard Maybeck developed his own palette of Pompeii red, blue-green, salmon and beige which were, in fact, soft, varied and harmonious with wood.

The chimney is made of clinker brick, a brick more coarsely textured than the conventional type because it has been overfired in the kiln. Originally discarded seconds, clinker bricks became so popular that correct overfiring became a craft in itself. Outside, the dark red clinker brick blends well with the grooved shingles and redwood grain; inside, the clinker brick fireplace is the visual focus of the living room and the symbolic focus of the home. Gustav Stickley, editor of *The Craftsman Magazine*, a periodical which monitored craftsman-like lifestyles with a religious fervor from 1901-1916, wrote that the fireplace should "sound the keynote of comfort and hospitality." The Craftsman movement had social as well as architectural standards to maintain.

The windows of the Brown Shingle house are typically casement or double-hung with pronounced wood frames. The upper segment may be cut into six, eight or even twenty-four smaller panes by wood partitions. The Hillside Club preferred hinged windows which swing outward for an unobstructed view, and French doors, the logical extension. However, Gustav Stickley's recommendation of 1912 is a more fitting description for most Brown Shingle houses in Oakland: "Wherever possible, the windows should be grouped in two's or three's, thus emphasizing a necessary and attractive feature of the construction, avoiding useless cutting up of wall spaces, linking the interior more closely with the surrounding garden, and providing pleasant views and vistas beyond."

The only curtains deemed suitable for the Craftsman window were denim, burlap or cotton crepe, natural fabrics in an age which predated synthetics. Even now, polyester just wouldn't look right with the wood grain which abounds on the interior. Boxed beams criss-cross the ceiling, wainscotting covers the walls, oak constitutes the floor boards, and redwood molding surrounds the doors. The built-in china cabinet with leaded-glass doors, the built-in closet "for wraps" under the stairway, built-in bookcases, and built-in desk are handcrafted of redwood, or more commonly, fir. If there are built-in columns to boot, they will most likely have a plain Doric capital.

Consistent with the use of natural materials, the form of the Brown Shingle house is "organic." That is, it appears to have grown of its own accord, rather than adhering to a formal floor plan. In one typical arrangement, two gables intersect at right angles to form a cross whose longer arm runs the

length of the rectangular lot. From the cruciform, rooms project on an as-needed basis. An upstairs porch to capture a view, for example, or a five-sided bay for a breakfast nook, or an entire wing for the master bedroom.

To accommodate the size and asymmetry, Brown Shingle houses in Oakland are found on relatively large parcels. The yards are filled with big evergreens (deodor cedar, lawson cypress, redwood, even sequoia), trees which are in scale with the building and consistent with a philosophy revering nature. Many of these houses have been reorganized inside as apartment units or business offices, with the fortunate outcome that more people have the opportunity to enjoy the craftsmanship and quiet quality the Brown Shingle Style offers.

CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW



Craftsman Bungalow (1905-1925)

Having just discussed the meaning of "Craftsman," the word "Bungalow" remains to be defined. The bungalow is typically a single-story house with one or more broadly pitched, overhanging gables. On most, a small gable caps the entry porch, echoed by a larger gable behind and to one side. The roofline recalls a child's drawing of mountains: a series of overlapping, inverted triangles. In Oakland, the other bungalow style shows the broadside of the roof to the street instead of the gable peak. In these, the space beneath the roof is adapted for use by the installation of a dormer window.

To describe houses which do their best to look like bungalows, the awkward word "bungaloid" was coined. While this word is typically used to categorize larger homes designed by architects for wealthy clients, it also applies to a vernacular building style that may be unique to Oakland. Many families find that the bungalow is too limited in size, that the two or three bedrooms do not provide enough living space. Because the lots are small, the only direction that remains is up. The more spacious, but rather ungainly two story result is rightly called bungaloid. Examples can be found on Carrington Street in the Fruitvale District.

The etymology of the word "bungalow" is a curious one, and we must travel to the country of India to discover it. In the early 1800's, the Indian Government built resthouses along the main road to aid travelers enroute. These thatch-roofed shelters were temporary dwellings, low in profile and surrounded by verandas. The British administrators anglicized the Hindustani adjective *banglā*, which means "belong to Bengal," and called these way stations "bungalows."

The Craftsman Bungalow is recognized by the deliberate use of natural materials, its emphasis on structural form, and a casual relationship with the out-of-doors—traits reminiscent of its Indian namesake. The Craftsman Bungalow has exposed beams beneath overhanging eaves, projecting brackets, and a propensity toward Swiss or Japanese motifs. Brown shingles persist, though sometimes woodsiding is used instead.

Two large pillars, broad at the base, slightly tapered at the top, and somewhat foreshortened, support the front porch gable. Made of wood or stone, the columns rest on pedestals which rise up out of the foundation and serve as endposts for the porch railings as well.

Ideally, the foundation of a Craftsman Bungalow would be constructed of local stone so the house would seem to emerge from the earth. In the Oakland flatlands, where building stone is not indigenous, most bungalows have a raised cement foundation sheathed with sculptured cement, brick, or quarried stone for a more textured appearance.

The front window on a Craftsman Bungalow is as individual as a signature. Like a name, the window

is divided into three parts, but beyond that, no two look exactly alike. One house has a trio of double-hung windows with sixteen small square panes on top. Another house has fixed windows filled with leaded diamond shapes. A third has a dramatic stained glass inset, another has mullions in an irregular geometric pattern, and so forth. The design can prove a helpful clue to a precise construction date.

The central window is always the largest of the three panels. Often for consistency, the front door arrangement is handled in the same way as the front window. Two sidelights, narrow panels of glass (leaded, paned, stained or otherwise), flank either side of the entry. The windows on the Craftsman Bungalow are decisively outlined with wood molding and grouped in horizontal bands to complement the dwelling's broad stature. Even the dormer window, with its broad overhang, is designed in careful proportion to the rest of the house.

The interior finish of the Craftsman Bungalow is a showcase of wood. The wall, floors, beams, built-in cabinets and benches are a wealth of grain. The owner had a choice of clear stain, to keep the redwood a light russet; medium, to enrich the surface to cherry; or dark, to deepen the grain to sombre walnut. Above the plate-rail, a wood mantle which caps the dining room wainscotting, there is a strip of wall about a yard high. This is commonly used as a neutral backdrop for decorative plates, bottles, and bric-a-brac propped up around the ledge. The *Craftsman Magazine* recommended a more creative idea. They suggested abstract floral designs which could be hand-stencilled like a frieze around the perimeter.

If informality is a corollary to naturalness, then the floor plan of the bungalow is another expression of the Craftsman ethic. The formal entry hall of earlier styles is discarded completely in favor of the front porch. The front door opens directly into the living room, which itself spills directly into the dining-room. The space is so free-flowing, that the dining room is used more for "living" than "dining" and the bedrooms are within earshot of the living areas. Privacy can be hard to come by.

The old-fashioned, subdivided kitchen of Victorian times is here incorporated into a single room. The pantry, the work counters, the cooking surface, the sink, are reorganized into a "work triangle" for the modern housewife. Gustav Stickley wrote in a 1912 issue of the Craftsman Magazine, "The most sensible plan is to have the kitchen large enough to allow some of the meals to be taken there. For there is no reason why this part of the house should not be cheerful and attractive as any other, and certainly where the mother has to do all her own work both she and the family would get more real comfort by simplifying the serving of meals as much as possible."

This new attitude toward comfort and convenience meant much more than the demise of the formal dining room. It marked the introduction of the Twentieth Century California way of life. At last, the Golden State had a residential style all its own, an architecture suited to its landscape, derived from native materials, and adapted to West Coast culture.

Seventy years ago, Craftsman represented a life-style as well as an architectural style. Today, the wares of that lifestyle are easy to come by at the many popular crafts fairs in the Bay Area. The pottery mugs, hand-woven rugs, and hanging candles hawked by street vendors fit in perfectly, as do the efforts of indoor gardeners. A Craftsman Bungalow on Hudson Street in Rockridge is a great example. The small size of the lot precludes extensive landscaping otherwise suitable for the Craftsman house. Instead, the owner has designed a magic forest of potted plants which cascade down the steps, fill in the porch, hang from the rafters, obscure the foundation, and generally sequester the house as if it were nestled in a wooded hillside.

Prairie School (1910-1925)

It's confusing, isn't it, that a style with a Midwestern accent is mixed up in this discussion of the Bay Area's own regional architecture. While Frank Lloyd Wright, the renowned Chicago architect, is credited with invention of the Prairie style, his product was brought to California by those who worked directly under him, and those who emulated descriptions of his buildings in the architectural journals. The expression "Prairie School" refers to the followers, the imitators, and the reinterpreters of the design concept initiated by Wright.

Although the Prairie School style was created to meld with the Midwest Landscape, its attributes are remarkably consistent with the features of the Craftsman tradition in Northern California. Both emphasize natural materials, horizontal proportions, and a kinship with the earth. Wright's design philosophy that "form follows function" blended with the attitudes, material and landscape of the East Bay as easily as it did with Illinois prairie land.

The Prairie School house in Oakland is noticeable right off because of its size. Two or two-and-a-half stories high, it is taller than neighboring bungalows or cottages. Room wings project to either side, making it wider than the typical Oakland house, too. The long, low walls are plastered in pastel colors, earning for it the nickname, Stucco Villa.

The Prairie School house is a juxtapositon of broad boxes which allow the building to adapt to differing site conditions. If the lot is flat, the boxes are at equal elevation; if the lot is steep—and many are in the Grand Lake District where the Prairie School style is found—then the boxes step up the hill. Likewise, the roof plane is broken and steps up the hill. The side expansion of room wings is seen more often on corner property whose size and frontage is more conducive to the expanded arrangement.

Each box is capped by a very low-pitched tar and gravel roof. The eaves overhang to the point of real or suggested cantilever. The shadows cast by the overhangs modulate the stark stucco walls. On some, the rafters are exposed beneath the eaves in a Craftsmanlike manner. On others, a perfectly horizontal board, whose broad side is parallel to the facade, describes the perimeter of the flat roof and enunciates the eave. This is called the fascia.

When one of the wings is a porch, or on rare occasions a portecochere (a covered driveway at the front door), then the flat roof is supported by heavy piers. Remember these. Their influence is felt in the California Bungalow as well as in other features of the Prairie house itself. The weight and proportion of the porch piers are reiterated in the massive, terraced stoop which flanks the front stair progression

PRAIRIE SCHOOL



from sidwalk to front door. The posts' chunky qual-

In 1916, California architect Irving Gill summarized

California Bungalow (1910-1925)

from sidwalk to front door. The posts' chunky quality is also seen in the heavyset chimney.

Horizontality is also a design element of the casement windows. They are grouped in bands, with shared projecting sills, and appear to wrap around the building. In some examples, there are geometric mullions but more often the pane of glass is left entire, a plain rectangular surface just like the building's walls. In fact, the Prairie School house is a careful composition of planes and voids, like a Mondrian painting.

On the inside, the bands of glass flood the rooms with natural light. While this is desirable, even Craftsmanlike, in concept, it can pose a disadvantage with western exposures. The Prairie School house in Illinois did not have to contend with the strong, late afternoon sun of California. Also, in a dense urban situation like Oakland, the picture windows can make privacy a problem, a dilemma not encountered in the more sprawling development of the Chicago suburbs. Therefore, it is typical to see from the street the soft folds of opaque drapes drawn behind the windows of the Stucco Villa.

Life in a Prairie School house can be sumptuous. The broad proportions evident on the exterior make for spacious rooms on the interior. Even the staircase is wide and the landings ample to match the opulent, airy spaces. The scale of a Prairie house lends itself to the display of large oil paintings, hand-woven wall hangings, and other oversized pieces of art which demand a gracious wall and enough room to step back and view them from a distance.

The cool pastel exterior of the Stucco Villa belies the warm interior where earth tones predominate and the extensive woodwork is stained a golden oak. The hardwood floor, the hallway panelling, and the bookshelves made of gumwood, are all subtly ornamented by strips of darker, mahogany-colored wood inlaid in geometric patterns. The fireplace is built of rough fieldstone and placed at a focal point in the living area. Light colors and fine craftsmanship are the attributes which typify the Prairie School house and sustain its image of elegant simplicity.

In 1916, California architect Irving Gill summarized the new architecture of the West in an article entitled "The Home of the Future." The rhetoric is inflated, but the description a valid one of the Prairie School house in the Craftsman Tradition: "If we omit everything useless from the structural point of view, we will come to see the great beauty of straight lines, to see the charm that lies in perspective, the force in light and shade, the power in balanced masses, the fascination of color that plays upon a smooth wall left free to report the passing of a cloud or neamess of a flower, the furious rush of storms and burning stillness of summer suns. We would also see the glaring defects of our own work if left in this bold, un-ornamented fashion, and therefore, could swiftly correct it."

California Bungalow (1910-1925)

The last style in this discussion of the First Bay Tradition has a little bit of everything that came before. The California Bungalow shares small size and low-pitched roof with the Craftsman Bungalow, stucco and horizontality with the Prairie School house, and front porch and exposed rafters with the Brown Shingle. The California Bungalow in Oakland is the builders' distillation of the more sophisticated features of its architect designed predecessors. Although extremely plain, especially compared to the bungalows designed by Greene and Greene in Pasadena, the California Bungalow offered comfortable living at popular prices.

In 1920, 216,261 people lived in Oakland, more

CALIFORNIA BUNGALOW



than three times the number residing here in 1900. Obviously, there was a need for a house style that could be quickly constructed at reasonable cost and yet perpetuate the California image that had enticed the newcomers in the first place. The California Bungalow filled the bill.

Almost fifty years had passed since the introduction of straightforward woodframe construction in Victorian times. Time and experience perfected the stud-and-joist technique, and simplified it even further. The studs, for example, were placed in a standard 16 inch pattern, in contrast to the Victorian merchant builders who placed studs more arbitrarily and at wider intervals. In wood frame construction the stud extends from foundation sill to roof. The shorter distance from floor to ceiling in the bungalow, combined with the reduced spacing between the studs, resulted in shorter, lighter lumber which was easier to handle. Next, diagonal sheathing was abandoned as the means of cross-bracing. Instead, rigidity was achieved by placing 16 inch long 2 x 4's horizontally between the studs.

Concrete greatly simplified the foundation. Although Portland Cement had been discovered in 1824, its versatility was not fully realized until the twentieth century. It took experimentation with the new product by Wright and other respected architects to bring concrete into the builder's arsenal. Formerly, the foundation consisted of bricks or stones, placed and mortared individually. With concrete, a trench is dug to define the building's perimeter, board forms lined up, reinforcing bars inserted, and the concrete poured in one fell swoop.

Similarly, the siding operation was greatly simplified by the introduction of stucco. Made of Portland Cement, sand, and a small percentage of lime, stucco is applied in a plastic state (hence the word "plaster") over a wire mesh curtain that is wrapped around the building. How much easier this was than using a level to keep each strip of clapboard horizontal, or nailing several thousand shingles on, one at a time.

If anything persisted from the Victorian Era it was the availability of plan books. Printed first in Southern California and later in Seattle, Chicago, and Minneapolis, these publications offered the prospective homebuilder an incredible assortment of bungalow designs. Working blueprints could be ordered for $5 to $25, usually less than one percent of the estimated construction cost, which started at under a thousand dollars for a four-room bungalow, and ranged upwards to $7000 for larger, very elaborate models.

The plan books provided more than design details, however; they also influenced taste and values. The introduction to the promotional brochure "Little Bungalows," distributed by the Los Angeles firm E.W. Stillwell and Company, presents a convincing argument in favor of the "genuine California Bungalow" whose plans they had for sale. "It is better to build a small house than to overburden the budget with debt for a larger one. A beautiful small house is just as expressive of character, aims, and aspirations as the large house. Mere size is a waste of money and human endeavor."

As new materials, construction techniques and mass-produced blueprints simplified house building, so the floor plan of the California Bungalow simplified housekeeping. One room merged with the next, and this meant fewer steps for the footworn homemaker. There were no hallways to collect household tumbleweed, no formal parlors to keep "company-clean," no knick-knacks to accumulate dust. The plan books boasted the efficiency their drawings offered. "The economic use of space" was a positive way to say "small," and "cozy" an optimistic word for "crowded." Besides, built-in conveniences more than made up for the lack of room because "movable furnishings," the brochure argued, "so complicate the labor of the cleaning day."

According to the 1925 *Oakland Tribune Yearbook,* 12,312 one-story houses were built in Oakland between 1907 and 1920. Between 1921 and 1924, in one-fourth the time, an astounding 12,822 more sprung up. Most of these were California Bungalows, concentrated in the new East Oakland subdivisions. The rest were scattered on hitherto undeveloped lots throughout the City, making it the most widely distributed house style in town.

The feature unique to the California Bungalow is the pair of elephantine columns which support the small gable over the front porch. On their own, these heavy-looking posts with broad base and tapered top seem too short and awkward, but in place they are clearly in proportion to the overall bungalow design. Covered in stucco, the columns have a wood framework underneath which is subject to termite damage and dry-rot both. Replacing the columns with anything less substantial in appearance than the elephantine originals—like wrought iron posts, or 4 x 4's—looks skimpy and regretfully out of place.

The origin of the bizarre bungalow columns is a matter of speculation. They were obviously influenced by the hefty piers on the Prairie School house, a style sometimes considered the California Bungalow's larger counterpart, and by the arroyo stone columns on the Greene and Greene bungalows in Southern California. Or, they may be descended from an ingenious Craftsman detail used by archftect A.C. Schweinfurt. In 1897, he designed the First Unitarian Church in Berkeley for a congregation whose membership included Bernard Maybeck, Charles Keeler (author of *The Simple Home,* a Craftsman manifesto) and representatives of the sylvan Hillside Club. Schweinfurt used massive redwood tree trunks, peeling bark and all, for the front porch columns on the church. Short, slightly tapered, and mammoth in dimension, the tree trunks may well have been the unwitting precedent for the oversized porch columns which became the bungalow trademark.

The interior of the California Bungalow resembles that of the Craftsman Bungalow, but it is generally plainer. The ornamental use of wood is limited to the moldings, baseboards, and hardwood floors. Sliding or french doors between living room and dining area may persist, but the leaded glass has been eliminated.

The California Bungalow in Oakland stands on a small lot (typically 40' x 100') with an abbreviated front yard and narrow side yard. This lack of land may frustrate the enthusiastic gardener, but the unified appearance is terrific. Look down a block of closely spaced bungalows and you will appreciate the up-and-down rhythm of the roofline, the in-and-out rhythm of the projecting porch. There is an

order to the parade of pastel bungalows that critics
In 1927, the Major Highway and Traffic Committee
fantasy is reality. This attitude, combined with the

order to the parade of pastel bungalows that critics call monotonous, but in fact a closer look reveals interesting variations within each house. There is enough repetition to establish a unified framework, yet enough variety for individual identification. This is the essence of good neighborhood design.

Unlike many Victorian neighborhoods whose visual unity has been destroyed by ad hoc demolition or thoughtless remodelling, Oakland's bungalow blocks are still intact. The pleasant, human scale of these neighborhoods, combined with the convenient size and reasonable price of the bungalows, has begun to attract to Oakland young couples and single people in the market for their first home.

Period Revival

The 1920's in California were a prosperity decade not unlike the exuberant period which had launched the Victorian Era seventy years before. This time oil played the role of gold. Three enormous oil strikes in the Los Angeles Basin in the early twenties surpassed all previous development in oil production nationwide. Until this time, gasoline had been a troublesome by-product, useless and dangerous to dispose of. But the Los Angeles strikes were coincident with the arrival of the automobile age, and the refineries were immediately redesigned to extract as much petrol as possble from every barrel of oil. Quite literally, oil stoked the fire of California's headlong expansion. Valued at 2½ billion dollars, the crude oil produced in California in the twenties alone was worth more than all the gold ever mined in the Golden State.

By 1925 in Alameda County, more than 100,000 automobiles were registered, and the popularization of the car precipitated three major changes in the Oakland land use pattern. First, the hill areas, once restricted from development because the trolley cars could not negotiate the steep slopes, were now available for residential buildings. Second, the moguls of the auto industry— General Motors, Fisher Body and Durant—located their factories in Oakland, spurring employment, population growth, and housing starts. Third, it was high time for a reconsideration of the local street network.

In 1927, the Major Highway and Traffic Committee of One Hundred was organized to devise "a comprehensive plan for the reconstruction of the ill-arranged collection of streets of Oakland into a well-ordered system of traffic arteries." They commissioned the notable firm Harland Bartholomew and Associates of St. Louis to conduct the study and prepare recommendations. One illustration in the text shows that although practically all the flat land was already urbanized (that is, served by sewer and water), there were only a limited number of streets with permanent pavement outside of the central business district. Other than Broadway, Telegraph Avenue, E. 14th Street, and a half-dozen more, the thoroughfares were worn macadam "in such condition that the traffic avoids them whenever possible." The report then enumerated major street improvement projects which were the key to fulfilling Oakland's "prospects and promises for the future."

Progress was the parameter, and the twenties were downtown Oakland's finest hour. The commercial buildings which now form the backbone of the central business district were erected in a single decade. Included in the roster are Capwell's, the Hotel Leamington, the Tribune Tower, the Fox Theater, the Central Bank and the dear-departed Athens Club.

At the tail end of the downtown building boom in 1931, an enclave of Art-Deco commercial structures appeared in the vicinity of 20th and Broadway. A facade of terra-cotta, turquoise tile, and incised angular patterns typify this style which is also known as Zig-Zag Moderne. The Breuner's Building, the Gray Shop, the Oakland Floral Depot, the Singer Shop, I. Magnin, and the Paramount are fine examples, known throughout the Bay Area not only for their individual merit as fine architecture, but also for their proximity, creating a theme for the commerical area.

Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles, the young cinema industry had begun to infiltrate the mass culture with the glitter of its own prospects and promises. Gilded movie palaces, bearing the names of major production companies like Fox, Paramount and RKO, brought Hollywood to the rest of the State, where the silver screen convinced the public that fantasy is reality. This attitude, combined with the flamboyant spirit which accompanied the oil strikes, the automobile age, and a period of prosperity, produced an outrageous architecture. The Californians chose a building style better suited to a film set that the local landscape.

In the twenties and early thirties, theaters, shopping centers and middle-class houses alike were designed to conjure up romantic times and far away places, another "period" in history. The frankness of the Bay Region style had given way to the pretense of Period Revival. No longer did the houses appear to emerge naturally from native soil; instead they looked as if they had been plucked from the thirteenth century English countryside and deposited in twentieth century urban America.

The longing for a foreign atmosphere was so great that entire tracts would be developed in a Provincial or Mediterranean mode as if it were a miniature European settlement. In Oakland, there was one called "Court of All Nations" and another, "Normandy Village," which is still intact on Holly Street, east of 73rd Avenue. Local builder Walter W. Dixon went one step better than just developing the eclectic houses. He published a magazine from Oakland called *Home Designer* to nurture an appreciation of Norman arches, Tudor half-timbering and Spanish pergolas, and to promote his product.

Another valuable, and somewhat less biased, guide to housing fasion in the twenties is the professional journal *Western Architect and Engineer.* Their report of the California Complete Homes Exposition conducted in Oakland in 1922, for example, shows Spanish residences with "cheerful" interiors, and two-story stucco houses with window shutters and arched doorways, designed by the architectural firms Miller and Warnecke, and Reed and Corlett. Equally informative are the advertisements, which confirm the popularity of oak floors, wallbeds and pastel paint, and provide the historical sleuth with meaningful clues to a building's original materials. Both periodicals are available at the Fine Arts Desk of Oakland Public Library, itself designed by Warnecke in 1949.

As with earlier house styles, there is a large and

small version of the Period Revival prototype in Oakland. The larger examples resemble the Stucco Villa and the smaller ones the Bungalow, primarily because they had to respond to the same size subdivided lots and utilize the same available building materials. No matter what the size or sub-category, all Period Revival houses have one outstanding feature in common: incredibly tidy owners. The lawns of Provincial cottages in Oakland are always mowed to crewcut precision, the prominent picture windows always streakless clean, and the welcome mat placed perfectly parallel to the front door.

Mediterranean Style (1915-1935)

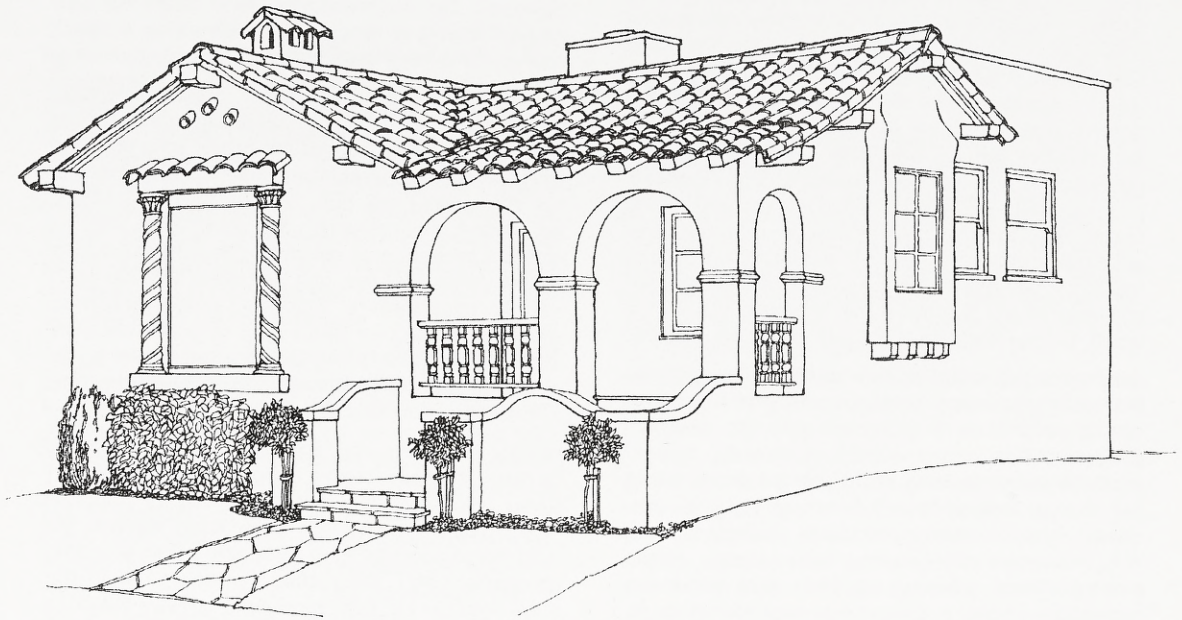
The Mediterranean Style house is easily identified by red roof tile. This is not to say that it has a red tile roof. Rather, the bulk of most smaller houses is covered by a flat or low-pitched tar and gravel roof concealed behind a parapet or the front porch gable. Typically, it is only the porch, or parapet, which is covered in red tile, but the suggestion is enough to set the Mediterranean mood for the entire house.

Originally, when the semi-cylindrical tiles were handmade by peasants in the Spanish countryside, wet clay from the native soil was shaped over the workman's strong thigh. Today, the tiles are made in molds and held together with wire, but the installation process is basically the same and the textural effect almost identical. The tiles are placed in interlocking rows, alternately facing up and down. The water that runs off the rounded back of the top tiles is collected in the swale created by the u-shaped bottom tiles. There is a pleasing unevenness to the rows of overlapping pottery that even machine modules cannot regulate.

The Mediterranean Style house is invariably sheathed in stark white stucco, a dramatic counterpoint to the undulating tiles. There is little color on the house, save the terra cotta of the tile and the wood frames of the six-part casement windows which are painted burnt sienna, or occasionally, as on Vernon Street in Adams Point, turquoise blue. The earthy red, clean white and bright aqua are a lively and attractive palette.

The ornamentation on the Mediterranean Style house is restrained compared to the explosive Victorian Styles, but a bit pompous compared to the ascetic Prairie School. Wood or wrought iron is used for second-story balcony railings on larger homes, or as window grills on cottages. On some houses, distinctive twisted columns support the front porch roof in post and lintel fashion, or frame the living room picture window. These twisted posts and similar baroque features characterize the "Churrigueresque" style (pronounced chi-ree-ga-resk), named after the Barcelona architect who first designed them in the 17th century, Jose de Churriguera. His decorative style, which dominated Spanish and Mexican architecture in his own time,

MEDITERRANEAN STYLE



was revived at the San Diego Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915 and incorporated in the vogue for Mediterranean architecture which followed.

The Hearst Castle at San Simeon has the most exaggerated examples of Churriqueresque towers and spires. Its architect, Oakland native Julia Morgan, was mentioned as a practitioner of the Craftsman Tradition, but she was so prolific, with over 1000 commissions to her credit, that she was proficient in the Mediterranean Style as well. The Berkeley City Club she designed on Durant Avenue has a Hearst Castle flavor, but her residential work in Oakland and Piedmont show the flair and expression possible in the Mediterranean Style at a smaller scale.

We use the inclusive name "Mediterranean" for this style because the architectural elements are assembled from the lands which border the Mediterranean Sea—Spain, Italy, and the Islamic world of North Africa. The coastal climate of California is classified as Mediterranean, one of only five such areas found in the world. (The other three are the coast of Chile, southwest Australia, and southwest Africa.) Because climate determines the plants and animals that survive in a given environment, the natural setting of California is very much like that of the countries on the Mediterranean shore. As a result, the house style that derives from Spain, Italy and Northern Africa can look extremely convincing in California because it fits right in with the landscape.

If there's red roof tile, you can be sure there are arches on the house too. Either the porch, the front window, the front door, or all three, have an arched opening. The arch may be pointed, rounded, flattened, or a circle with a peak in the Islamic manner. Even the weep holes which stick out through the facade to allow the tar and gravel roof to drain, or the attic to air, are arranged in an inverted curve. Extending from the side of many Mediterranean Style houses is a stucco wing wall with another arched opening. This provides a gracious entrance to the backyard, when the arch is the size of a door, or a ceremonial entrance to the garage, when the arch is as wide as the driveway.

The front walk and the driveway are an abstract compositon of paving stones cut at acute angles and installed in a random manner. To match the roof and trim, they are usually painted a brownish red, a startling contrast to the patch of kelly green grass to either side. Originally, it was fashionable to paint the different stones assorted hues, and East Oakland homeowners who enjoy striking color combinations have perpetuated the trend.

Inside the Mediterranean Style house the walls are covered with a rough, almost lumpy plaster that is either white, or an integral earth tone to simulate adobe. Dark wood beams are exposed across the ceiling. The Churrigueresque motif is picked up in staircase bannisters, and the arch—in whatever form it took outside—is used for a passageway between rooms. The fireplace is sheathed in white, integrated into the wall adobe-style, and surrounded by ceramic tiles. To either side there is an arched recess for display of candlesticks, keepsakes, or religious icons.

Large Mediterranean Style houses are found in Lakeshore Highlands, Oakmore, Trestle Glen and scattered in Piedmont Pines. In Rockridge, above Broadway, architect/builder Fred L. Confer was responsible for some of the most handsome examples. In North Oakland, San Antonio, and East Oakland, smaller Mediterranean houses are more common, filling the space left between California Bungalows, Neoclassic Boxes and Queen Anne Cottages.

There are three tracts composed entirely of Mediterranean homes which are so well integrated with one another that a visit there is a cross between a trip to Spain and a tour of Universal Studios. One is found on the loop road comprised by Castello and Cordova Streets, just off Fruitvale Avenue. A second is located on 77th and 78th Avenues between Holly and E. 14th Streets. The third, largest and most varied fills a six-block area around the intersection of Monterey Boulevard and 35th Avenue. The residents of these three "villages" take exemplary care of their homes and maintain a quality neighborhood image. They make it clear that this is a good place to live.

Provincial Style (1919-1935)

When William the Conqueror invaded England in the year 1066, he brought from France the Norman style of architecture. With that, peaked roofs and gothic arches proliferated and became the trademark of the vernacular country home. Nine hundred years later, when the doughboys returned to the United States from the continental battles of World War I, they brought home a taste for the quaint cottages and picturesque settlements they had seen abroad. Yet somehow, when the medieval imagery was transposed to California soil, the result resembled a dollhouse.

Provincial style houses in Oakland are small in scale and fussy in texture. They can be identified by a gambrel or steeply pitched roof that is covered with slate or a composition shingle which was especially designed to look like thatching. Gladding, McBean and Company, the largest West Coast tile manufacturers of the period, advertised that the coloring of its roofing product "reproduces the stains of lichens and storms," and, they bragged, "it smacks of storied antiquity."

The walls of the single-story Provincial house are built of rough stucco on a frame of 2 x 4's, but stone, brick and wood are incorporated for decorative effect. The wood is used in the manner of half-timbering, a technique associated with English Tudor style houses of Shakespeare's time. In real half-timbering, the spaces between the hefty structural members are filled with plaster or brickwork; the resulting triangles and rectangles form the facade. In the twentieth century version, however, the exposed wood is only ornamental. The geometric pattern of dark timbers and white spaces is applied over the structure, not as part of it.

Originally, stone was used for foundations and front steps, a convenient way to recycle the boulders strewn across Britain's fields. But when the Norman and Tudor style houses were reinterpreted in the twenties, technological advances made it more convenient to build a concrete foundation, and cover this with a rock veneer. Stone is also used as decorative trim around windows and doors, appealing to the person who believes a man's home is his castle, and should look like one.

A castle is impenetrable, and in that vein the Provincial house has very few openings. The simple board or panelled door has only a small lookout window, if any. The living room has a large, arch-shaped picture window, but this is typically partitioned into very small panes by heavy lead mullions. The casement windows are small, sometimes hooded, and occasionally reduced to narrow slits suited at best to an archer's bow.

As expected, the interior is cool and dark, private and secluded, with limited access to the yard, and little connection to the foreign, urban landscape outside. A floor plan as irregular as possible adds to the mystery, as do hidden stairways, passages between rooms and real or suggested changes in the floor level. The roughly plastered rooms are small in size and unconventional in shape—romantic perhaps, but not always comfortable. As we have noticed with every house style since the 1870 Italianate, the fireplace picks up the architectural theme, and in the Provincial house, a large hearth of coarse brick or unmatched stones is indispensable to the image.

While this style was practiced by architects W.R. Yelland, Carr Jones, Walter Ratcliff and Henry Gutterson, a simple builder's variant of the Provincial house is common in both North and East Oakland. Its plain stucco walls, often painted mustard, ochre or umbre, the single story, and the front porch, are all suggestive of the California Bungalow. Although the expression is quite different, the two styles look well intermixed because the size and scale are the same. The steep roof and Tudor arch picture window are the features which distinguish the imported Provincial style from the regional neighbor.

PROVINCIAL STYLE



An outstanding example of Period Revival architecture in Oakland is the Idora Park tract between Telegraph and Shattuck, 56th and 58th Streets. Until 1927, this was the site of the most spectacular amusement park ever built in the East Bay. At the turn-of-the-century, F.M. "Borax" Smith and the Realty Syndicate developed this extravagant attraction to lure potential investors to nearby real estate. Extensively landscaped, Idora Park was an ideal picnic ground. When the beer and sandwiches were consumed, there was so much more to do for "fun, frolic and jollification": the Laughing Gallery, the Scenic Railway, the Great Coal Mine, a Tea Garden, a Merry-Go-Round, a full-fledged theater, a Friday Night Amateur Contest, and countless other entertainments, all for the price of a single dime. According to the 1909 Oakland Chamber of Commerce, Idora Park was as exceptional for its "cleanliness and wholesome atmosphere" as it was for the facilities it offered.

When Idora Park changed from amusement park to housing tract, every trace of the original landscape was razed, the native oaks included. The Period Revival house, after all, was not meant to fit in, but to stand out. Each Provincial Style house in the enclave has a large living room window on the right and a recessed front door atop three or four red front steps on the left. The picture window is treated in a variety of ways: one is surrounded by flat, irregular stone; another is barely shaded by a projecting, shingled hood; a third is partitioned by mullions; and a fourth concealed by a striped metal awning. The steep peaks, cylindrical towers and gambrel roofs calmly alternate with the low pitched tile roofs of their Mediterranean Style neighbors. What a wonderful fantasyland! The unusual glass-globe streetlamps are not even fifteen feet tall and there are no overhead utility lines.

All-American Ranch Style

The make-believe world of Period Revival was jolted back to harsh reality by World War II. In the thirties, housing starts slowed down for lack of funds; in the forties, for lack of materials. No longer could architecture afford pretense. The few dwellings that were constructed had to be erected quickly and efficiently in order to house the workers who migrated to war-related industries, the meccas of employment.

California became a center of manufacturing for the defense effort and received more than a proportionate share of federal spending. During the war years, Washington pumped some 3½ billion dollars into the California economy, fueling employment and consequently boosting housing demand. The airplane industry was centered around Los Angeles, but thanks to Henry J. Kaiser, ship building was concentrated in the Bay Area—Richmond, Oakland, Sausalito, and Vallejo. The shipyards were in operation 24 hours a day, and at peak capacity in 1943 a new freighter was launched every ten hours.

It took three shifts and a work force with no barriers to race or sex to operate these enormous factories. Such numbers had never before been employed in Oakland. To provide them housing, and to anticipate the wave of soldiers who would need a place to live when the war ended, three new subdivisions were developed in Southeast Oakland. A major rezoning effort was necessary between 1942 and 1944 to accomplish this. The 460 acres in the vicinity of the area where the Nimitz Freeway and 98th Avenue now intersect, that had been zoned for industrial use, were switched to residential use instead.

The Wartime Tract house, subsequently built there, is an early species of the All-American Ranch Style, a dwelling type that would totally dominate the national housing market from the late 1940's on. What better way to package democracy for a returning soldier and modern consumer both, than a plot of land, a detached home, and a private parking space for every family. Later examples of the All-American Ranch Style found in Oakland, but not discussed here, are found in the Crestmont, Sequoyah Hills, and Park Ridge Estates subdivisions.

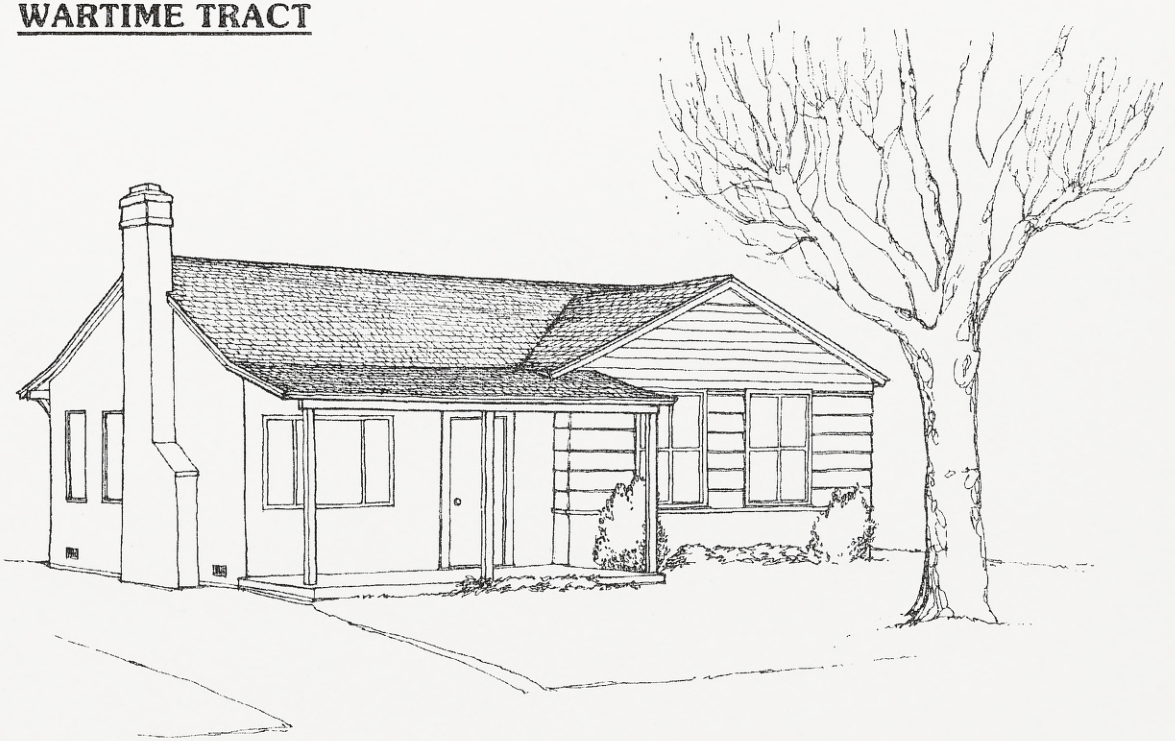
Once the demand for housing clearly outweighed the supply, it was necessary to impose municipal regulations to protect a public no longer able to pick and choose. Well over 600 subdivisions had been platted in Oakland before 1939, but for the most part, improvements were at the behest of the developer who recognized amenities as an aspect of promotion.

In 1939, the City of Oakland adopted its first set of subdivision regulations, and the three Southeast Oakland tracts were early examples of its implementation. The subdivision ordinance, which has since been expanded, determined the width and turning radii of streets, designated the size of the blocks, and required that the developer provide paved streets, curbs, sidewalks, storm drains and sanitary sewers. The evolution of the All-American Ranch Style went hand-in-hand with the gradual sophistication of subdivision regulations which governed the development of site plans for what has likely become the most widely distributed architectural style in the United States.

Wartime Tract (1942-1945)

The Wartime Tract house is a small,one-story building on a concrete perimeter foundation with five rooms and a pitched roof. The roof is shingled and the exterior walls are finished with either stucco or rustic siding. In Oakland, the Wartime Tract house is concentrated in Columbian Gardens, Brookfield Village and Sobrante Park. It is also scattered along the avenues among the California Bungalows in the

WARTIME TRACT



80's and 90's, below East 14th Street.

The three subdivisions mentioned were the work of three different contractors—Phillip Heraty, The Brookfield Corporation, and Shultz Construction Company, respectively—so each has modificatons of its own. However, the Wartime Tract house is basically rectangular in shape with the broad side facing the street. The roof overhang is supported on two-by-fours to create a recessed front porch. The parking area is usually a detached pad or carport, although in Brookfield Village where the houseplan is u-shaped, the garage is incorporated in the body of the house.

Mysteriously in Sobrante Park, many houses have two front doors. This is attributed to the wartime custom of inviting defense plant workers to board in the family home. The extra door leads to a room which could be closed off from the rest of the house on the inside, securing privacy for the boarder and family members both.

The interior of the Wartime Tract house consists of a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bath. The limited dimensions of the rooms and the constraints the small size imposes on a growing family are the same drawbacks of the California Bungalow. To overcome this, some families have expanded the house to the back with the addition of a family room, an extra bedroom, or just a sliding glass door leading on to a patio. Other property owners have converted the garage to living quarters, and still others have added a second story above the garage.

What little decoration there is on the Wartime Tract house is typically an imitation of some earlier, more established style. Window shutters are meant to suggest colonial architecture, the diagonal brackets on the porch posts are a souvenir of Victorian times. The porch railing may have some craftsman-like stickwork, or the living room window may be subdivided by wooden strips in imitation of Period Revival leaded glass. On many examples, a veneer of brick is mortared over the lower portion of the facade to simulate a masonry foundation and lend an air of permanence. Ironically, in the chimney where the brick is truly structural and not decorative, it is camouflaged with paint, the same pastel color as the rest of the house.

The Wartime Tract house is sited further back on the lot than the typical Oakland bungalow or rowhouse. This gives the impression of more land as befits the All-American Style. However, the lots are only 75 feet deep to begin with, so the effect of more land in front is achieved by sacrificing precious backyard space, a hard bargain. The sidewalk is next to the curb, with no planting strip in-between, and this too makes the lawn seem more spacious than it really is.

Thanks to the site planning, Sobrante Park has one of the most successful examples of street tree planting in the City. There is a London plane tree, or two, in the front yard of every house, instead of in the planting strip as elsewhere in Oakland. The location of the tree on the house side of the sidewalk gives the roots ample space for nourishment which promotes vigorous growth while precluding the risk of sidewalk damage. The canopy of leaves is especially graceful because the trees are mature and the streets are curved.

BOOKS

These publications are prominent in the extensive library of reference material used in the preparation of REHAB RIGHT. While this is a selected bibliography only, the list provides further reading on specific subjects addressed in preceding chapters. Additional books and periodicals of special interest are alluded to in the text.

An asterisk(*) indicates availability at the **Oakland Public Library.** If the book you desire is not on the shelf at the main building or the branch convenient to you, it can be reserved, or requested from another library.

Architectural History

*Bean, Walton E. *California: An Interpretive History.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1968.

Dykstra, John Beatty. *A History of Physical Development of the City of Oakland: The Formative Years, 1850 - 1930.* Thesis for a Masters Degree in City Planning. University of California, Berkeley.

*Fleming, John, Hugh Honour, Nikolaus Pevsner. *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture.* Hammondsworth, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1966.

*Freudenheim, Leslie Mandelson, and Elisabeth Sacks Sussman. *Building with Nature: Roots of the San Francisco Bay Region Tradition.* Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974.

*Gebhard, David, et al. *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California.* Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973.

*Kirker, Harold. *California's Architectural Frontier.* Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974.

*Oakland City Planning Department. *Oakland's Form and Appearance: An Evaluation Based on the 701 Urban Design Study.* Oakland, 1968.

*Olwell, Carol and Judith Lynch Waldhorn. *A Gift to the Street.* San Francisco: Antelope Island Press, 1976.

*Richey, Elinor. *The Ultimate Victorians of the Continental Side of the San Francisco Bay.* Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1970.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles.* Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1969.

*Woodbridge, Sally, et al. *Bay Area Houses.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Yoho and Merritt. *Craftsman Bungalows.* Seattle: 1910.

Rehabilitation and Repair

**America's Handyman Book.* The Staff of the Family Handyman. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

**Basic Home Repairs Illustrated.* The Editors of Sunset Books and Sunset Magazine. Menlo Park: Lane Books, 1974.

Directory 77. Jay Turnbull, ed. San Francisco: The Foundation of San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, 1977.

*Grow, Lawrence. *The Old House Catalogue,* New York: Main Street. Universe Books, 1976.

**New Life for Old Dwellings: Appraisal and Rehabilitation.* U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Handbook 481, Washington D.C., 1975.

**Reader's Digest Complete Do-it-yourself Manual,* Pleasantville, New York: The Reader's Digest Association, 1973.

*Stephen, George. *Remodeling Old Houses Without Destroying Their Character.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976.

**The Old-House Journal.* Volumes I - VI. Brooklyn: The Old-House Journal Corporation, 1973-1978.

The Old-House Journal Buyers' Guide, 1977. Editors of *The Old-House Journal.* Brooklyn: The Old-House Journal Corporation, 1976.

The Old-House Journal and the *Reader's Digest Complete Do-it-yourself Manual* are frequently referred to in the text and serve as companion publications to REHAB RIGHT. The Oakland Public Library has agreed to order back issues of *The Old-House Journal* and additional copies of the *Reader's Digest Complete Do-it-yourself Manual* for the convenience of REHAB RIGHT readers. To acquire personal copies, you can purchase the *Reader's Digest* book at C. Markus Hardware, in Oakland, and subscribe to the periodical by writing to *The Old-House Journal* Corporation, 199 Berkeley Place, Brooklyn, New York 11217.

The **U.S. Government Printing Office Bookstore,** 450 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco (8:00 to 4:00, Monday through Friday) carries informative yet inexpensive pamphlets on home maintenance and repair. For specific titles, call 556-6657.

For more academic research, visit the **California Room** of the Oakland Public Library, and the **Environmental Design Library,** Wurster Hall, University of California, Berkeley.

PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Preservation and historic organizations provide an opportunity to meet people who share an interest in old houses. The groups schedule lectures, slide shows, and house tours for their membership. Often, the general public is invited too. To varying degrees, preservation organizations are also involved in the political process, lobbying for landmarks legislation and governmental action to save valuable buildings from demolition and insensitive remodelling.

Alameda County Historical Society
c/o Mrs. Robert H. Swadley, President
5461 Fernhoff Road
Oakland, CA 94619
531-0222

Alameda Victorian Preservation Society
P.O. Box 1677
Alameda, CA 94501

Berkeley Architectural Heritage
P.O. Box 7066 Landscape Station
Berkeley, CA 94707

Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association
c/o Peter Carlson
1937 8th Avenue
Oakland, CA 94606

Californians for Preservation Action
P.O. Box 2169
Sacramento, CA 95810

Camron-Stanford House Preservation Association
1418 Lakeside Drive
Oakland, CA 94612
836-1976

East Bay Negro Historical Society
4519 Grove Street
Oakland, CA 94609
658-3158

The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage
2007 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
441-3000

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
c/o Oakland City Planning Department
1421 Washington Street
Oakland, CA 94612
273-3911

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Western Regional Office
681 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
543-0325

Oakland Museum Association
1000 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94607
Council on Architecture
273-3055
History Guild
273-3842

PANIL Notes
Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League
4318 Montgomery Street
Oakland, CA 94611

State of California
Office of Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 2390
Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 322-8595

Victorian Alliance
4143 23rd Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
824-2666

Victorian Preservation Society
c/o A Central Place
Clorox Building
1221 Broadway, Suite 390
Oakland, CA 94612
834-7897

HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS

The citizen groups and non-profit organizations listed below concern themselves primarily with housing rehabilitation in Oakland. In addition, there are nearly a hundred homeowners associations and neighborhood coalitions in the City that are area specific. If the needs of the immediate community warrant, these groups too may address housing rehabilitation. For the name of your neighborhood organization, call the Oakland City Planning Department, Development Controls Division, 273-3911.

East Oakland Housing Task Force
Fran Matarrese, Chairwoman
3914 E. 14th Street
Oakland, CA 94601
261-8440

This City-appointed, 14 member commission includes representatives from the many fields involved in rehab, such as realtors, lenders, contractors, community organizations, and City staff. The East Oakland Housing Task Force convenes the second Tuesday of every month at the Office of Community Development, and their meetings are open to the public.

Oakland Better Housing, Inc. (OBHI)
Richard F. Illgen, Executive Director
1027 Adeline Street
Oakland, CA 94607
465-9911

OBHI is a non-profit corporation which acquires vacant houses in Oakland and rehabilitates them for resale to low and moderate income families. OBHI conducts the entire operation: they negotiate for property, hire construction workers, purchase materials, locate buyers, and arrange financing.

Oakland Community Organizations Housing Committee
Fran Matarrese, Chairwoman
Scott Reed, Staff Person
3914 E. 14th Street
Oakland, CA 94601
261-8440

The Oakland Community Organizations Housing Committee helps to develop and monitor rehabilitation assistance programs administered by the Office of Community Development, and other public agencies. They meet with legislators regarding allocation of State and Federal funds to support such measures. The Oakland Community Organizations Housing Committee has absorbed the East Oakland Housing Committee.

Oakland Neighborhood Housing Services (ONHS)
Kenneth Nunn, Executive Director
1641 98th Avenue
Oakland, CA 94603
632-8892

ONHS provides rehab counseling and financial assistance for home improvement projects which contribute to neighborhood revitalization in the Elmhurst District. ONHS is a partnership between residents, City government, and lending institutions.

OCCUR Housing Committee
Joseph Palacios, Staff Person
1419 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94612
839-2440

The OCCUR Housing Committee is concerned with rehabilitation, housing insurance, architectural and contractual services, fair-bidding procedures, and housing availability.

MATERIALS

REHAB RIGHT is an endorsement of design concepts, not stores. This section, therefore, offers some guidance on where to shop, rather than presenting a directory of commercial enterprises.

Stores and suppliers of special or especially handy products are mentioned in the text of this book because many of the materials needed to rehabilitate an old house without destroying its architectural character are not available at conventional hardware stores. Such **names and addresses are included solely to demonstrate that certain materials needed to REHAB RIGHT are definitely available.** No approval by the City is implied, nor does a specific reference suggest that the named supplier is the exclusive source of any item. Prices quoted are subject to change without notice. (Refer to the Disclaimer.) In a reasonable but not exhaustive search, Oakland sources were investigated first. **Buying in Oakland is encouraged.**

Conventional **hardware stores** are a good place to shop for tools and certain raw materials. They are not a good source for finished products, since the products tend to be standardized on a national scale for mass consumer appeal, and are rarely appropriate to the architectural style of Oakland's older houses. Old-fashioned hardware stores where the raw materials are in bulk or bins, rather than individually sealed plastic packages, have more charm, as well as the more unusual materials that are suited to older houses. Hardware departments in discount stores are sometimes a less expensive source of conventional items. However, the price you pay to get the discount (if indeed there is one) is the limited selection of products, and the lack of sufficient or knowledgeable sales personnel to help you out. Luckily, there are still several good hardware stores in Oakland. Look for them in neighborhood commercial districts.

Building materials suppliers, like paint stores, lumber yards, and plumbing outfitters, are the best source for raw materials because their selection is usually the largest, and includes older styles as well as modern. On the other hand, the selection generally includes countless doodads and wonder tools which make extravagant claims of timesaving and suitability for every job. These can quickly run up the bill of sale. Determine, as best you can, the amount of materials and type of tools you need before going to the supplier. Qualified sales personnel can then help you select among different manufacturers.

Salvage yards are a good place to shop to replace old house parts. There are several salvage yards in the East Bay, and they are well aware of the part they play in the restoration of old houses. Unfortunately, as a result, they are often the outlet, unwittingly or otherwise, for architectural features that have been illegally plundered from extant buildings, rather than rescued from demolition. The stock at salvage yards fluctuates, so several trips, some research, and a dose of imagination may be necessary to locate what you're after.

Specialty stores and **suppliers that deal in authentic reproductions of original house parts** are a valuable resource to REHAB RIGHT, and there are a few around locally. However, putting features in a house that are from an era earlier than the building itself is as bad an anachronism as installing jarringly modern features. Make sure the reproductions are suitable to the architectural style.

Often, the only option is to find a **craftsman** who will mill or build a house part to your specification. One way to locate such individuals is in the classified ads of local newspapers, like *The Montclarion* or *The Classified Flea Market*, or to contact a preservation organization. When working with a craftsman or contractor, make certain your intention to REHAB RIGHT is clear before work begins.

Salespeople are, after all, sales people. Never let a zealot talk you into something that is contrary to the design principle expressed in REHAB RIGHT, or that is more to the store's benefit than to yours, or your house's. A salesperson profits if you buy something new. **You, your house, and the City, all profit if you keep what is original to the house.** What you've already got may be old, but as REHAB RIGHT has demonstrated, it is probably more sturdy, and definitely more appropriate to the architectural style of the house, than anything new is likely to be.

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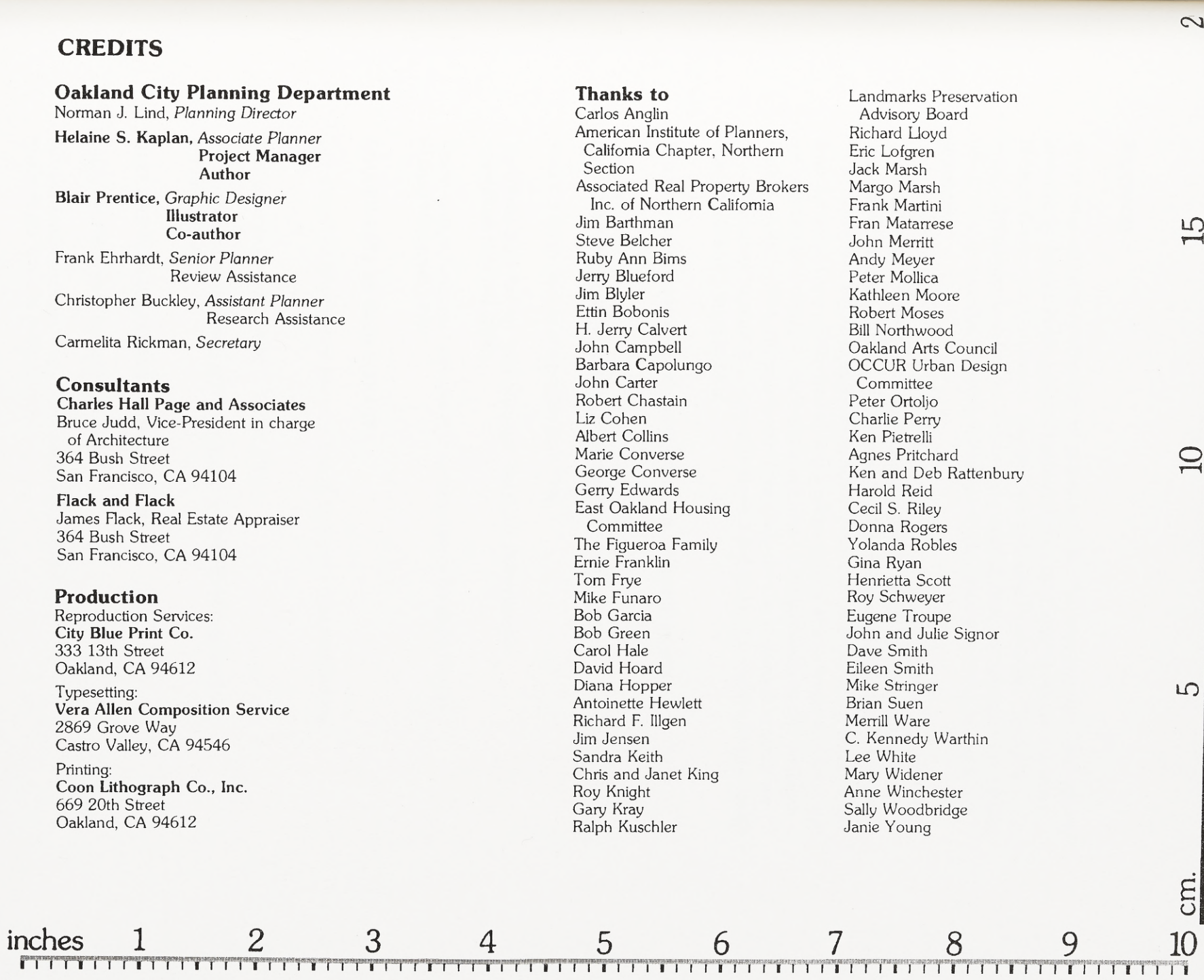
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Resources

These titles are jumping-off points for further research. The knowledgeable librarians and archivists at Oakland Public Library's Oakland History Room and the African American Museum & Library at Oakland can help you find additional information. These two treasured resources, both located in downtown Oakland, have vast collections of archival primary source materials, including newspaper articles, journals, photos, postcards and scrapbooks.

The Golden Gate Branch Library has a special relationship with the African American Museum & Library at Oakland. In 1982, the East Bay Negro Historical Society, a citizen-led initiative, was invited to establish an African American collection in the Golden Gate Branch, the first library in Oakland to have a predominantly African American focus. Later, the organization changed its name to the Northern California Center for Afro-American History & Life. In 1994, this organization joined with the City of Oakland to create the African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO). AAMLO reopened in the former Charles S. Greene Library in 2002.

To learn more or make an appointment, visit www.oaklandlibrary.org.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM & LIBRARY AT OAKLAND

Shades of North Oakland photo collection, 1999.

The Official Black Panther Party Historical Tour Guide, Huey Newton Foundation, circa late 2000s.

Visions Toward Tomorrow, Lawrence P. Crouchett, Lonnie Bunch III, Martha Kendall Winnacker, 1989.

GOLDEN GATE BRANCH LIBRARY

Early Emeryville Remembered: Historical Essays, Emeryville Historical Society, 1996.

From Labor to Reward, Martha C. Taylor, 2016.

Temescal Legacies: Narratives of Change from a North Oakland Neighborhood, Jeff Norman, 2006.

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY, MAIN BRANCH

Killing the Messenger, Thomas Peele, 2012.

Oakland Tribune archives, https://newspaperarchive.com/.
Access at any Oakland Public Library.

Resources Continued

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY'S OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

Emeryville Historical Society quarterly journals, 1990 – present.

Golden Gate Neighborhood clippings file.

Images of America: Emeryville, Emeryville Historical Society, 2005.

WEBSITES

East Bay Yesterday, A podcast series by local historian Liam O'Donoghue, covering many underrecognized local heroes, https://eastbayyesterday.com/.

Emeryville Historical Society, the group's online presence includes some articles from their journals, https://emeryvillehistorical.org/.

Oakland Heritage Alliance, a non-profit that connects Oakland's past to its present and future through walking tours and a newsletter, http://oaklandheritage.org/.

Oakland wiki, A crowd-sourced pool of knowledge started in 2012 about many of Oakland's people, places and events, https://localwiki.org/oakland/.

COMMONS ARCHIVE

GOLDEN GATE LIBRARY LOCAL COLLECTION

SERIES 1

A Renovator's History

Blacks in Oakland: 1852 - 1987

Community Profile: Golden Gate Neighborhood

Golden Gate Conversations

Golden Gate Neighborhood Conditions

Golden Gate Walking Tour

I Must Not Forget

On Becoming A Historic Resident

Thanks

This local collection series is born from the wisdom and work of many Oakland local historians, neighbors, librarians, researchers, thinkers, creatives and writers. I am deeply grateful for their generosity in sharing their knowledge and expertise. And to you, readers and researchers, the potency of this collection lives on through your curiosity.

History is never finished: you can continue to reveal the complexity of the story of this place by sharing your thoughts and experiences on the Commons Archive cards.

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Oakland Public Library

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A STATE OF OPEN MIND

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CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL

Advancing California through the arts and creativity.

About marksearch

Cultural researcher, literacy educator and artist Sue Mark, a long-time North Oakland neighbor, has a keen interest in over-looked stories. As part of the marksearch team, she designs ways for people to share their stories for empowerment and preservation. With conversation as her primary tool, she develops interactive projects that make space for social memory. Whether pushing a work cart designed as a mobile park or towing a traveling billboard by tandem bike, marksearch engages people to share personal histories that create lasting neighborhood narratives.

Since 2000, Sue has partnered with Bruce Douglas (her husband), an engineer and inventor with a passion for repurposing materials. Their practice as the marksearch team blends their diverse skills and shared life. From neighbor-led walking discussions to sidewalk conversations, commemorative plaques and murals recognizing the collective knowledge of many generations, their projects move beyond aesthetic experience. The marksearch team has implemented interdisciplinary projects with community groups, historians, urban planners and municipalities throughout Oakland and across the globe.

marksearch.org

Of 9 copies, this book is number 8

PHOTO KEY (IMAGES LEFT TO RIGHT)

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVIST Family photo of Ruth Lasartemay with mother, one of the founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society 1947	**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS** Golden Gate's business district on San Pablo Avenue circa 1980 Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society	**FARMERS' MARKET** Phat Beets Food Justice Market & CSA during Communities' Crossing, a series of neighborhood history events 2015	**HISTORIC SITE** Charles Klinkner's real estate 'headquarters' in the town of Golden Gate 1885 Courtesy Emeryville Historical Society	**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS** Fred Williams, second-generation owner of Williams Appliances at 6451 San Pablo Avenue 2015 Photo by Matt Dibble
NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVISTS The Lasartemays, founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society, Oakland Tribune 1981 Courtesy African American Museum & Library at Oakland	**LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR** Joanne Dickerson-Harper, whose parents were among the first African Americans in the Golden Gate (1940s) 2015 Photo by Lorah Gross	**HISTORIC SITE** Signage from the Black Panther self-guided walking tour, 5622 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, now the All Good Bakery 2015	Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE commons archive Commons Archive Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE Commons Archive COMMONS ARCHIVE	**HISTORIC SITE** Stanford Avenue greenway, once tracks for the Southern Pacific Railroad & the East Bay Electric Lines 2015
FARMERS' MARKET Phat Beets Food Justice Market & CSA, Toveo Hill, market manager 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma	**HISTORIC SITE** The Lasartemay's East Bay Negro Historical Society Museum at 4519 Grove Street (now MLK Jr. Way) 1976 Courtesy African American Museum & Library at Oakland		**HISTORIC SITE** Oakland Public Library's Golden Gate Branch Library, a Carnegie endowed building constructed in 1918 2017	**LONG-TIME NEIGHBOR** Robin Freeman, planner & environmentalist at Communities' Crossing, a series of neighborhood history events 2014 Photo by Pamela Palma

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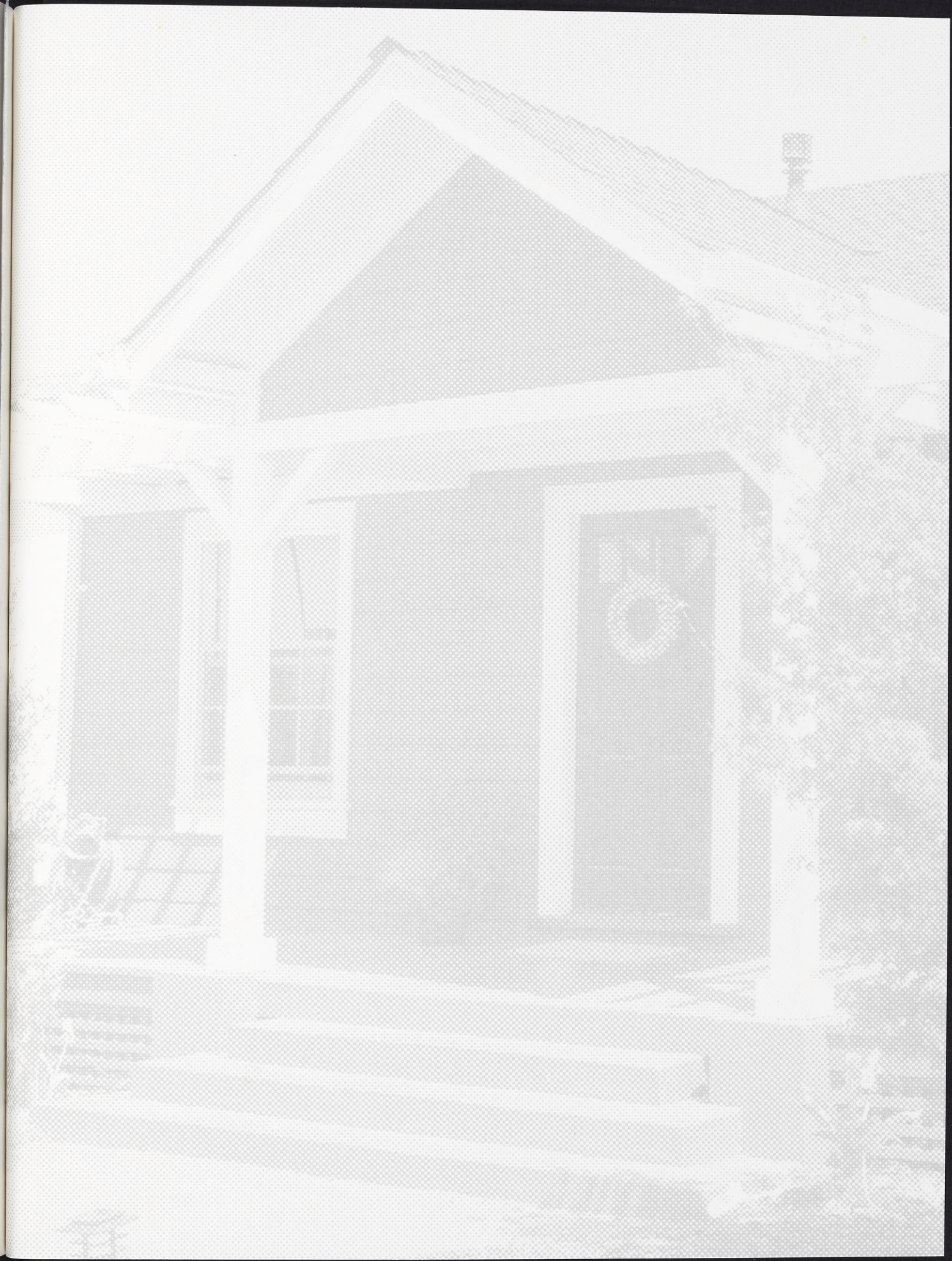


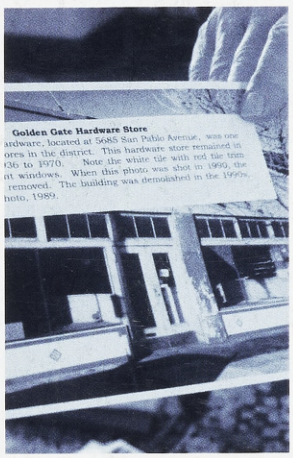
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One of the first houses in the neighborhood purchased by an African American family in the 1940s, 2015

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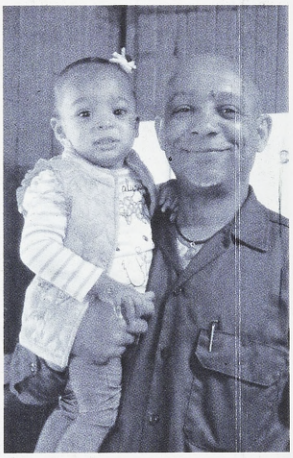
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